

PlayStation®

Official Magazine - Australia

JANUARY ISSUE 2009
www.gameplayer.com.au

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PRIZES!**

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

STORM RISE

How one Australian company transformed an **entire genre!**

INSIDER INTERVIEWS

AUSSIES ON THE RISE

Are Australian developers the future of the games industry?

FIRST HANDS ON:

- Red Faction: Guerrilla
- Bionic Commando
- WWE Legends of WrestleMania
- SKATE 2
- and more!

LATEST INFORMATION

THE NAME YOU F.E.A.R

Project Origin regains the **F.E.A.R** with the return of Alma!

WARFARE EVOLVED

Killzone 2 makes our eyes **BLEED!**





BACK FLIP

SLIDE

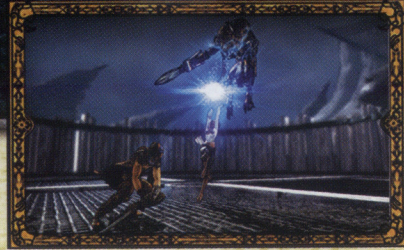
PARRY



A New Hero Emerges—Master the elite, acrobatic fighting style of history's most agile warrior.



An Epic, Open World—Your choices determine just how the story evolves.



A Deadly New Ally—Your partner, Erika, is your greatest weapon against the darkness.

“A SURE CONTENDER FOR GAME OF THE YEAR” - IGN

PG

Mild fantasy violence

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SWING

ROOF RUN

GRIP FALL

WALL RUN

DUEL



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PLAYSTATION 3



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PLAYSTATION®3*

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the Island



PlayStation®
Network

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from the PlayStation®Network.

PG

Mild violence and
coarse language

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PLAYSTATION 3



It's a new year, our January issue and we're celebrating all things Aussie, 'cos lets face it, we do it better!

We got the chance to head up to Brisbane to check out a team that is changing the industry. The Creative Assembly, the creators of the *Total War* games, has turned their sights on the RTS genre for console! We have to thank the guys for taking the time out for Official PlayStation Australia to give us a world exclusive, especially for the hours spent not just showing

us the game but weeks spent getting our gorgeous cover right!

We've also tracked down Aussies worldwide to get their take on the future of gaming and how they got into the industry. Hopefully, it will inspire a couple of you to join them!

As we go to print *F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin* has been refused classification in Australia. It seems that intense graphics and horror equals bannage! We'll hopefully see the game get a release in 2009 because what we've seen is not only graphically impressive, but total nightlight material – it's bloody terrifying!

Finally – its summer, it's hot, so get outside and enjoy it! But while hittin' the beach, watching the cricket or bouncing your shiny new *Streetfighter IV* beach ball off the heads of your friends. Make sure you slip, slop, slap!

Ness

VANESSA MORGAN EDITOR

PSN: sibernaut **Playing:** Prince of Persia **Wanting:** Streetfighter IV

KILLZONE 2 OR SKATE 2?



MARK SERRELS

You're like that weird social worker guy who made me choose between my Mum and Dad after I got spanked too vigorously for eating dog food – I don't know, alright! (*SKATE 2*).

PSN: Serrels
Playing: Resistance 2
Wanting: SKATE 2



PHILLIP JORGE

Killzone 2. It makes me want to fly over to Holland, skip past all the awesome 'pleasantries' that country provides a gentleman of leisure like myself, and loot the Guerrilla Games office!

PSN: PhilLipO
Playing: CoD: WaW
Wanting: Killzone 2



JAMES COTTEE

There's simply no contest here. A skateboarding game, however realistic, cannot compete with a game where you can kill vast numbers of space Nazis in the future!

PSN: DrWho3987
Playing: Streetfighter IV
Wanting: Fat Princess



ANTHONY O'CONNOR

Man, that's harder than *Sophie's Choice*! Anyone remember... that movie? Oh, you bloody kids! Okay... I'm going to say *Killzone 2*, but honestly the difference is so negligible...

PSN: stoxy242
Playing: Resistance 2
Wanting: Killzone 2

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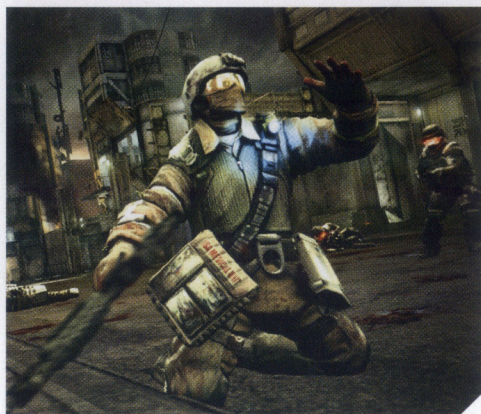
SHOUT OUTS: Sleep :: Coca Cola :: Black
Cherry :: Ubisoft :: Vispi :: The Creative
Assembly :: Our families :: Little Vinnie
and little Ethan! :: Becton, if you don't fix
my apartment, I'm coming for you!



COVER STORY 28 STORMISE

Rising to take on the big guys!

ON THE COVER



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Guerrilla get it right with their next FPS



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We talk to the creators about *Project Origin*



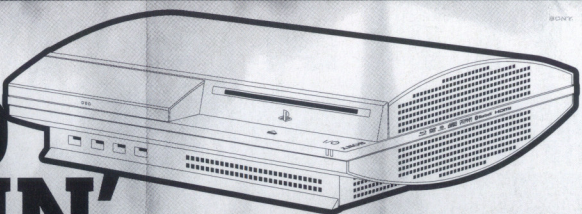
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Aussie developers discuss the future of the industry

THIS MONTH...

IN DEPTH
How to install a new hard drive

WORDS: MARK SERRELS

HARD DRIVIN'



THINGS YOU NEED:
1X PS3 CONSOLE
1X USB BACKUP HDD
1X SCREWDRIVER TOOL
1X NEW 2.5" SATA HDD 250GB+

ESTIMATED TIME OF COMPLETION: 2 HOURS

- STEP 1:** Turn off the PS3 and unplug the power cord. Remove the top cover of the PS3 by sliding the latch on the left side of the cover and lifting it up.
- STEP 2:** Turn on the PS3 and go to the Settings menu. Select the Storage option and then select the Hard Disk Drive option.
- STEP 3:** Press the X button to select the Hard Disk Drive option. The PS3 will then display the Hard Disk Drive menu.
- STEP 4:** Press the X button to select the Hard Disk Drive option. The PS3 will then display the Hard Disk Drive menu.
- STEP 5:** Press the X button to select the Hard Disk Drive option. The PS3 will then display the Hard Disk Drive menu.
- STEP 6:** Press the X button to select the Hard Disk Drive option. The PS3 will then display the Hard Disk Drive menu.
- STEP 7:** Press the X button to select the Hard Disk Drive option. The PS3 will then display the Hard Disk Drive menu.
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- STEP 10:** Press the X button to select the Hard Disk Drive option. The PS3 will then display the Hard Disk Drive menu.
- STEP 11:** Press the X button to select the Hard Disk Drive option. The PS3 will then display the Hard Disk Drive menu.

58 Supersize your hard drive

Your step by step guide to upsizing



40 SKATE 2

Could be legendary



70 LOCOROCO 2

More than just a ball of cute?

COMPETITIONS

18 WIN!!!

• Winner takes all! PS3, games, Blu-rays, DVDs, Bags – THE WORKS!



INCOMING

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10 Versus
Were we a bit harsh on *Tomb Raider Underworld*? Someone on Gameplayer certainly thinks so...

Gaming's latest and greatest

\$300 MILLION!

Rock Band creators suddenly get very rich

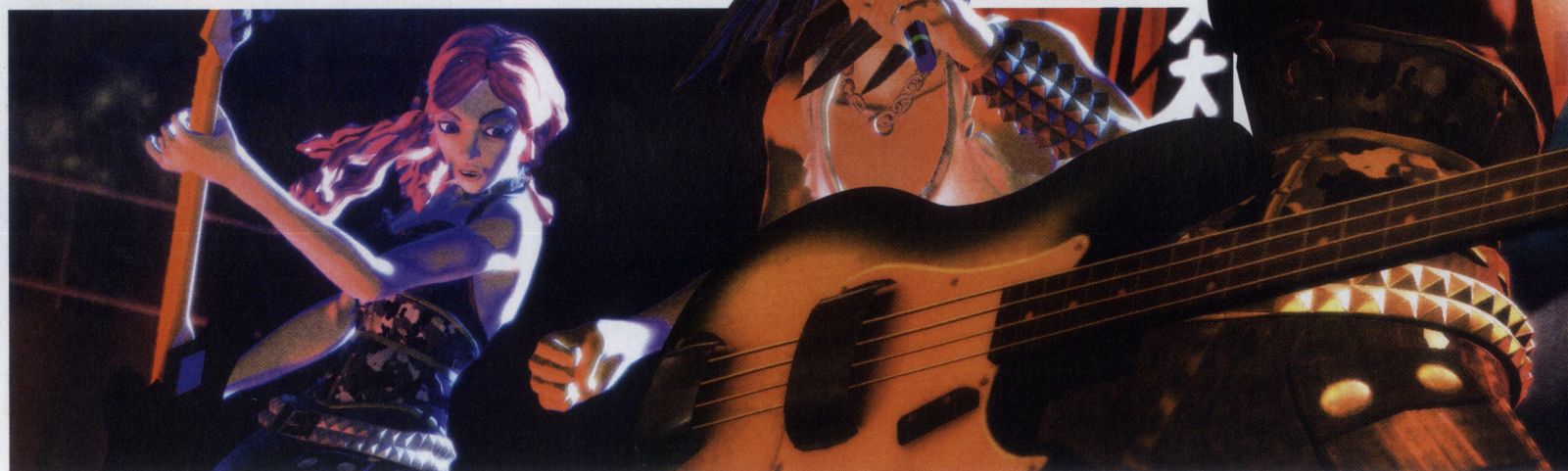
Despite the fact that the world economy seems to be devolving into recession, some of you *still* might be lucky enough to get a bonus in your pay cheque this Christmas, a little somethin' somethin' to help make the holiday season a little easier on the old wallet.

But it will undoubtedly be pocket change compared to the insane \$300 million bonus that *Rock Band* creators Alex Rigopulos and Eran Egozy have received this year from super

rich MTV owners Viacom.

Both of these lucky buggers were given a \$150m bonus for exceeding performance targets, with another chunk of dough of the same amount heading their way in 2009.

You think maybe they could have spent some of that money shipping some copies of *Rock Band 2* to Australia?



EVERYTHING IN MODERATION

The first *LittleBigPlanet* levels get culled...

After the initial, kinda predictable, flurry of rip offs plaguing the *LittleBigPlanet* user created levels space – your *Mario LBP* levels, your *Sonic LBP* levels, *Mirror's Edge*, *ICO*, et al. Sony has done an epic blunt cull of all these levels, without explanation, and a couple of seemingly harmless levels have gotten themselves caught in the crossfire.

The numerous *Mario* levels, and copyright breaching in other levels we understand – Sony has to protect itself – but some excellent, original, creative levels got thrown out with the bathwater. Levels that we loved like 'World of Colour', and 'The Azure Palace', got canned, with nary

a reason given.

Is this a precedent? Or just over-zealous moderators? Hopefully Sony won't let good level designs go to waste and people don't stop creating content completely.





12 Where to Now?
Where to now for that sackalicious little feller Sackboy? We explore some options for Media Molecule's groundbreaking new franchise.



14 Mr Kennedy speaks...
We interview WWE superstar Mr Kennedy, probing him on wrestling life, and all the games stealing his free time as of late... Kennedy!

WHO ARE THESE GUYS...

Just who *are* these chaps receiving all the cash and the kudos and what not?

ERAN EGOZY

Mr Egozy has the fancy schmancy title of 'Chief Technical Officer' at Harmonix, and graduated from the MIT with a MSc in Electrical Engineering. He seems to be the big kahuna on the tech side of things.

ALEX RIGOPULOS

The CEO of Harmonix, Alex Rigopulos has a BSc, as well as an MSc in Media Arts and Sciences from MIT in the States – the college where he met a certain Mr Eran Egozy!

MEN OF THE YEAR

Both of these chaps made *Time* magazine's prestigious list in 2008, as a result of *Rock Band*. It's hard to understand, since the game's launch in Australia was a bit botched, but overseas the game has been massively successful!

PRISON BREAK

Solid Snake style

Life imitates gaming constantly, so when the tables flip on their side and life imitates gaming, we smile.

This was the case with the daring escape of one Turkish citizen who, after being given a seven year prison term in

Germany, escaped, *MGS*-style, via the ingenious use of a cardboard box.

Amazingly, the convicted drug dealer squeezed himself into a cardboard box being couriered out of the prison. The escapee is still at large.



IN SHORT...



STREET FIGHTER IV

Release date officially announced: Feb 20th for Europe and Australia.



REAL FOOTBALL

Everton are looking for top talent in real life, via *Football Manager*...



THE PS3 CHATPAD...

Will be hitting our shores around the beginning of this month, and is priced at \$79.95.

WHAT'S HOT OR NOT

Too hot to handle? Or too cold to hold?



Killzone 2 Beta

It's been absolutely amazing...

SKATE 2

Smooth, fluid, incredible. This game is a true contender.



Resistance 2

The online co-op is so well balanced, and fun to boot.

LocoRoco 2
Awesome, but we can't stop singing those songs!



Money

We need more to buy all the awesome games.

Rock Band
Maybe those rich *Rock Band* guys can help out?!



LBP Mods

Go easy on the awesome levels will you guys?



OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION
MARK SERRELS



GAMEPLAYER.COM.AU
CLINT MCCREADIE

VS

Our harsh **Tomb Raider review** in issue 24 resulted in some heated discussion – some agreed with our score, while others shook their heads in ardent disbelief. One of those chaps was Gameplayer's very own **Clint McCreadie**, who rushed OPS's Mark Serrels with a recently sharpened machete, baying for blood...

Clint: [With an insane, controlled glint in his eyes] What... the... hell... Mr Serrels – what is with the criminally low score for *Tomb Raider Underworld*? Seriously dude, are you some kind of sadistic misogynist? Really man, the metaphorical beating you (unfairly) gave this game borders on domestic abuse – and Markie... there's no excuse.

Mark: Clint, first off, congratulations on your totally radular name, secondly – there's a pretty damn good excuse for my 'abuse' of *Tomb Raider Underworld* – to be perfectly honest I didn't enjoy the game all that much. I had a lot of issues with the game and, while the score was admittedly harsh, I feel my opinion was justified.

Clint: Nay, I disagree verily. *Tomb Raider Underworld* is the best *Tomb Raider* in years. Visually, the game has made an enormous leap, and features some of the most fiendishly fun puzzles in recent memory. In my mind Crystal Dynamics has done a stellar job of exhuming Miss Lara

Croft and bringing her back to life in a very next gen way.

Mark: Really? Next gen? How so? In many ways I do see your point – *Tomb Raider Underworld* is a technical leap for the franchise, but it's truly one of the most pithy leaps ever seen – and when compared to the stellar, all-round cinematic experience PS3 owners were given via *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*, *TRU* pales in comparison, to an extent.

Clint: *Uncharted*? What the hell does that have to do with anything? That game was nick-named 'Dude Raider' for a reason. Plenty of *Uncharted*'s ideas were directly ripped from *Tomb Raider*...

Mark: And plenty of *Tomb Raider*'s ideas were nicked directly from Indiana Jones – that's the nature of the beast, my friend. The reality is that *Uncharted* does everything *Underworld* attempts more efficiently, and does so in an entertainment package *Tomb Raider* can't compete with.

Clint: I'll have to not-so-politely disagree with you there Mark – *Uncharted*'s puzzles were tacked on and underwhelming, making the game seem like a slightly undercooked third-person shooter with some platforming sections thrown in. *Tomb Raider Underworld* is a delicious puzzle-fest, it's Rubik and Sudoku combined in a majestic puzzle-baby-love-child that could confound Confucius.

Mark: Yeah, maybe, but *Tomb Raider Underworld* also has a problematic camera, ancient shooting mechanics, clipping that would make *Assassin's Creed* weep, and controls that just don't feel right. *Tomb Raider Underworld* does plenty of things right in terms of level design, but it gets a lot of the fundamentals wrong.

Clint: No, negatory. On this count you are super wrong. Admittedly *Tomb Raider Underworld* is far from a perfect game, it does have some issues, but let's be honest here – don't you think that five out of ten is completely unjustified for a game that does so much right?

Mark: I reckon it's harsh, but fair.

Clint: Get real – are you one of those dudes that goes around telling everyone in the pub their pint is half empty?

Mark: Um, no.

Clint: Yes you are, and I also suspect that you steal candy from babies and stick toffee on the roof of starving dogs' mouths...

Mark: Hey jackass, I only did that the one time – and what does that have to do with *Tomb Raider*?

Clint: Everything!

Mark: I'm leaving.

Clint: NO YOU SHUT UP!

Mark: Eh?

Clint: I just wanted to say that...

ON THE FORUMS

Tzar77

I enjoyed *Legend*, looking forward to this one...

Snake*AUS*

This is looking better than previous additions...

Bagmup

Played the demo – plays a lot like *Uncharted*... not bad!

Alpheon

I haven't played *TR* since the first game on the PlayStation.

PSIress

I want a HDTV to see Lara in her full glory (not that glory :P).

**THERE IS A LOT MORE
TO TREATING SKIN CANCER
THAN REMOVING A MOLE**

Skin cancer is deadly serious. Melanoma, a potentially lethal skin cancer, is the most common form of life threatening cancer in 15 to 24-year olds. Unplanned exposure to the sun can put you at risk. Outdoors

you can't just rely on sunscreen. So this summer, protect yourself in five ways with a hat, clothing, shade, sunglasses and sunscreen.

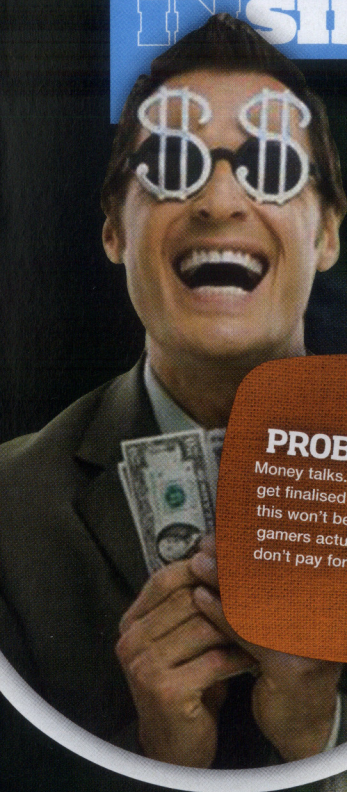
australia.gov.au/skincancer



PROTECT YOURSELF IN FIVE WAYS FROM SKIN CANCER



Australian Government



DLCPLANET

EXPLAIN YOURSELF...

With about 70 costume variations popping up on PSN a week after LBP's release, an entire game based around DLC is surely not far behind.

PROBABILITY

Money talks. If the concept can get finalised we don't see why this won't be possible. Unless gamers actually wake up and don't pay for overpriced DLC.

HOW WILL IT PLAY?

This will be hugely customisable, limited only by your bank balance. Expect to see levels using only one or two elements ad infinitum.

THE STORY

No story to speak of. Think of it as an expansion pack that you must purchase five dollars at a time. That's a fiver per item – so each sticker, object, material, vehicle etc.

LITTLEJIGPLANET: DANCE THE NIGHT AWAY

EXPLAIN YOURSELF...

For some reason (one that we still can't work out) everyone seems to love dancing – either watching the 'stars' doing it, or just busting out 'The Robot' while waiting in line at the supermarket.

THE STORY

The planet's king is celebrating his birthday and what better way than to jump around like a fool to some tribal beats and vaguely-credited music tracks? Happy pants and a dorky smile are also a must!

HOW WILL IT PLAY?

The SIXAXIS will be used in a way that allows it to be placed in your pocket while you act out the onscreen dancing instructions. Sackboy will then replicate your moves, in a really cute and adorable way, of course.

PROBABILITY

Once Sony releases an add on pack for the SIXAXIS which better replicates one-to-one movement, then this game will be begging to be made. Until that time, not so much.



WHERE TO NOW?

LittleBigPlanet is a funky little game indeed. We got thinking, with the awesome possibilities offered by user created content, LBP really could spawn some interesting spin-off titles. Of course, if any of these ever get made, we're so suing for a slice of the profits!

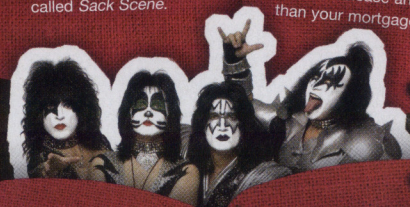
LITTLEJIGJAMMIT

EXPLAIN YOURSELF...

Sony's answer to Rock Band and Guitar Hero will sell a squillion. Sackboy's band will be made up of other sack people and they'll be called Sack Scene.

THE STORY

No real story per se. Just a bunch of songs from LittleBigPlanet played out on plastic instruments. Extra songs will be available for download within a week of release and will cost more than your mortgage repayments.



PROBABILITY

It's difficult to compete in today's music game market, and the EyeToy implementation sounds a bit sketchy. It will probably get pulled midway through production.

HOW WILL IT PLAY?

The guitar peripheral will be made out of sack material, for that extra realistic vibe. Also, rather than follow a note chart, you'll be able to use the EyeToy to line up your frets with the camera to play notes. Hilarity as four people battle for blurry camera space.

SACKBOY GETS SACKED: A TALE OF RETRENCHMENT

EXPLAIN YOURSELF...

This edutainment title will introduce kiddies to the joys of losing your job. So when Daddy comes home drunk, they have a deeper understanding of how he's feeling.

THE STORY

The main scenario is played out with Stephen Fry reprising his role as a condescending Brit. Kids everywhere will get to learn a little bit about cold, hard reality.

HOW WILL IT PLAY?

A side-scrolling adventure full of awesome locations, such as the Centrelink waiting room and the back alley of the local pub. Collect stickers from the 'jobs vacant' section of the local paper.

PROBABILITY

Sackboy has the potential to be a really effective education mascot. The only thing holding this concept back is the fact that any kid likely to find this useful will probably have had to sell their PS3 for rent money.



DON'T TURN A NIGHT OUT

70 Australians under 25 will be hospitalised
due to alcohol-caused assault in an average week.

www.australia.gov.au/drinkingnightmare

INTO A NIGHTMARE

MISTEEEEERRRR KENNEDDDYYY... KENNEDY...

We have a short chat with WWE superstar Mr Kennedy

Mr Ken Kennedy. One of the most charismatic stars in the WWE, and an all round swell chap to boot, When we got woken up at 8am on a Saturday morning with an offer of interviewing one of the true rising stars in wrestling, we couldn't refuse – but we couldn't help being a bit apprehensive. The last thing we needed at that early hour was to be blasted with the promo stylings of one MISSTERRRRRRRR... KEEENNEDDDDDYYY... Kennedy.

But thankfully the big man was a laid back, easy going fella. It was a strange conversation – all we wanted to talk about was wrestling, and all Kennedy wanted was to talk about games. This is our rough compromise.

OPS: We hear that you're injured these day, is it tough being off the show?

KEN KENNEDY: Yeah, totally. It always sucks when you're off the road, and it's tough watching the show. What I normally like to do in this situation is just use the time to take stock and spend time with my family.

OPS: You mentioned you're still watching the show – are there any new wrestlers catching your eye?

KEN: I'm a big fan of Kofi Kingston – I always liked him – I think he's going to do well. Ted Dibiase Jr is another one I enjoy watching.

OPS: Is there anyone you're looking forward to wrestling when you get back?

KEN: Well, Shawn Michaels is someone I've wrestled with previously, but I'd like to get in the ring with him again – there's just so much you can learn from wrestling a guy like that.

OPS: Talking about guys you can learn from – are there any people behind the scenes that influence you, or you look up to or go to for advice?

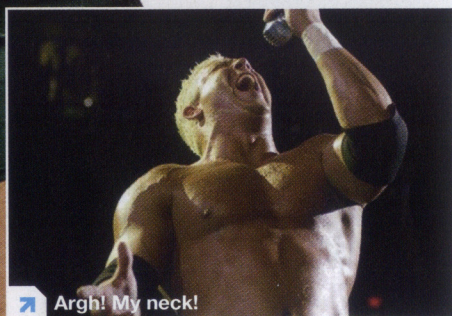
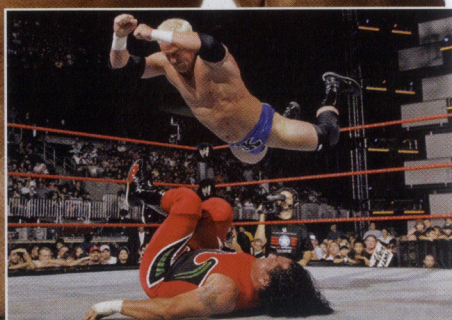
KEN: Well we have the road agents, who are all former wrestlers and I always go to them for advice – guys like Ricky Steamboat, Finlay, who still wrestles also, and Arn Anderson. There's so many guys, I really like to get advice from Arn, just listen to what he has to say about my matches – he always sees the match from an angle you didn't see, he really has a great mind for wrestling.

OPS: You mentioned all those old school guys – like Ricky Steamboat and Arn Anderson – do you think wrestling misses guys like that, wrestlers that could really tell a story?

KEN: Well, yes, to some degree – but by the same token wrestling has to evolve, if *Leave it to Beaver* or *I Love Lucy* came on today it wouldn't be too popular. Eventually things run full circle though, and what was old is new again.

OPS: So, we heard you're a pretty big videogame fan? Is this true?

KEN: Oh man, I'm a huge gamer, especially now that I'm off the road. I've been playing a lot – I'm really into *Dead Space* right now, I love that game. Of course I'm always on *World of Warcraft*, and I recently picked up *Spore*. I spend way too much time playing video games these days.



Arg! My neck!

RELEASE SCHEDULE

Coming soon to a store near you...

EARLY 2009

-  **Resident Evil 5**
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: RED ANT
-  **SKATE 2**
GENRE: SPORTS | DISTRIBUTOR: EA
-  **Bionic Commando**
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: RED ANT
-  **Silent Hill: Homecoming**
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI
-  **Killzone 2**
GENRE: SHOOTER | DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
-  **F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin**
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: WARNER BROS
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GENRE: SHOOTER | DISTRIBUTOR: RED ANT
-  **SOCOM: Confrontation**
GENRE: SHOOTER | DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
-  **L.A. Noire**
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: ROCKSTAR
-  **The Wheelman**
GENRE: RACER | DISTRIBUTOR: RED ANT
-  **World in Conflict: Soviet Assault**
GENRE: STRATEGY | DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION
-  **Sacred 2: Fallen Angel**
GENRE: RPG | DISTRIBUTOR: RED ANT
-  **Trivial Pursuit**
GENRE: PARTY | DISTRIBUTOR: EA
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GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: EA
-  **50 Cent: Blood on the Sand**
GENRE: ACTION | DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
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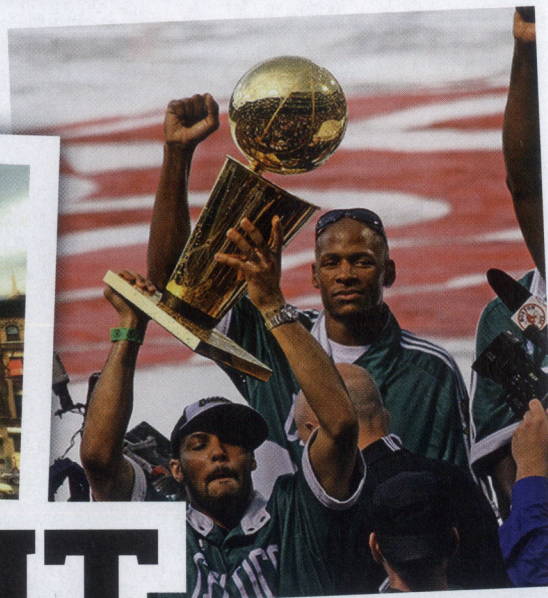
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LETTER OF THE MONTH!



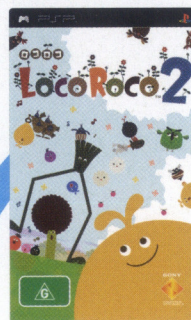
GIVE IT 100%...

Hey guys, love the magazine, I never miss an issue, but there is one thing that's been bugging me the past couple of days – *GTA IV* trophy support. Don't get me wrong, I love *GTA IV*, and I'm glad that they've finally decided to implement trophy support. What I'm annoyed about is the fact that you have to start a new game to get them. To me that's just really annoying. I'm not trying to gloat but I've got 100% in *GTA IV* and to have to start a new game to get a trophy for something I've already done just really annoys me. You'd think that they would be able to make it so that when you download the patch it would just take the information from your stats and give you trophies accordingly. It was the same with *Uncharted*, you had to start a new game to get trophies for what you had already done. Let's hope they make some changes before you can eventually download the patch, and

thank God that games coming out in the following months will come with trophies already in the game, so there will be no need for downloads a few months down the line.

Sean, via email

We feel your pain Mr. Sean. Especially with regards to getting 100% in GTA IV – geez, that has got to sting. Sadly, that's the way it is. The good news is, obviously, that almost all the games released from this moment on will have Trophies in-built, so it'll never happen to you again. I'm sure that won't placate your righteous rage, though. Man, just think about all those pigeons you'll have to hunt down again in GTA IV.



LETTER OF THE MONTH WINS... LOCOROCO 2!

The letter of the month this issue will receive a copy of *LocoRoco 2* for their troubles – enjoy!

FUNNY YOU MENTIONED

Being the proud, proud owner of a 60GB PS3, ah thank you! I enjoy many pleasures with my PS3 – being able to play my PS2 games, having two extra USB slots and so on so forth. The MAJOR problem I have, and I reckon a few others in Australia may have the same problem, is that I have no room left on hard drive. I have only downloaded one thing from PSN and that was my free *GTHD* game. I have around 18 or so games on my hard drive and, since the last patch (after the installation of *BioShock* and *Saints Row 2*), I only had 3.25GB left! Now, I don't know about you but I'm pretty sure there is no other way to make room other than deleting games or replacing the hard drive – but that's a big hassle. In any case will Sony be bringing a external hard drive to the PS3? Any help or info would be great!

John Paul, via email

John Paul, it's a common issue – but we're glad you brought it up, because we've in this very issue. If you flick across to page 58 we've got a guide that helps you install a new HDD into your PS3. To be perfectly honest we feel this freedom is a major strength for the PS3 and we had no problems moving everything across, games, saves, everything. HDDs are extremely cheap these days, so it's well worth making the investment and getting a 250GB drive and installing it. See our feature for guidance.



ON THE DOWNLOAD

Every month when I get your mag I check out the online pages and promptly visit the Sony online store and check things out. I would say that mostly it is very good with lots of free demos and downloadable gear. As it should be, as most of it is product promotion anyway. However, where I am most disappointed is the cost of downloadable content. Fair enough some DLC was fairly priced and the games they are for are chocked full of content to start with. But, I noticed that *Tiger Woods PGA Tour 09* had two download packs at a ridiculous \$12.95 each! I thought that since we were living it up with the much larger Blu-ray discs, that this content could easily fit. The two packs are from previous editions of the game, so why would you pay extra for it when you have most likely played it anyway? Given that the downloadable content was available so close to the release date it is obvious that EA are simply cashing in on DLC from its customers. I would expect more from a company as big as EA.

Fab, via email.

Fab – is that actually your name? It sounds like it's an awesome nickname that you've made up and given to yourself. I tried to make everyone call me Big Daddy Serrels once. That's why I've got a scar on my upper lip – long story. A long, painful, tear-jerking story. Anyways, yeah, it's a mixed bag really. Some is great value – like the additional DLC for Pixel Junk Monsters – while others is ridiculous. Just vote with your wallet!



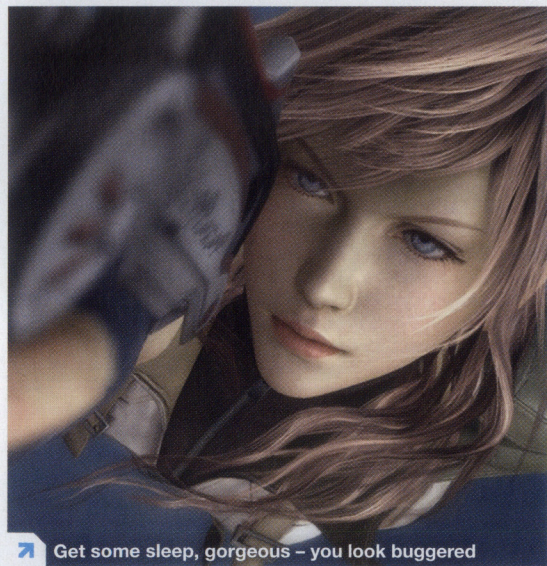
➤ Tiger Woods – post Michael Jackson-esque surgery

IT'S WAR!

I have been following *Final Fantasy XIII* pretty closely ever since that 'Lightning' trailer came out. Through my research, I discovered that *Final Fantasy XIII* is coming out on the Xbox 360 as well. Anybody who has been playing the *Final Fantasy* series on PlayStation for the last 10 years has to be annoyed. However, I've worked out that it's a clever PS3 marketing technique and we should all thank Sun Tzu for this one. The thing is, maybe *Final Fantasy XIII* is also coming on the Xbox 360 but *Final Fantasy Versus XIII* and *Final Fantasy Agito XIII* are only on Playstation 3 and PSP. So, that means, that if you wish to get the full extent of *Fabula Nova Crystallis Final Fantasy XIII* (I just wanted to say that) you need to buy, at the least, a PSP. So before people start biting Square Enix at the throat and cursing them for selling out. They aren't, they are just fighting behind enemy lines, for us.

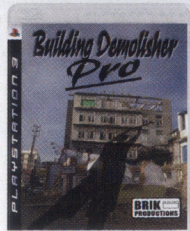
Reza, via email

Ah, I get where you're coming from – it's the ol' double agent, switcheroo, working behind the scenes like Nina Myers in 24. At first you think she's your buddy, and before long she's stabbing Bill Gates in the throat with ballpoint pen, and planting a nuclear device up the crevice up an armed, post red ring 360. Rad.



➤ Get some sleep, gorgeous – you look buggered

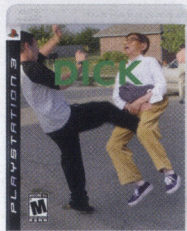
IT SHOULD BE A GAME!



BUILDING DEMOLISHER PRO

By Brendan Meharry

The aim is to demolish a building before the time limit runs out. At the start you will just start out with smaller, easier buildings. But as the game progresses you will find more bigger and harder buildings to go ape shit on!



DICK

By Todd Williamson

Go on a journey from mild-mannered doormat to the biggest tool in the world. Starting in your office workplace you go through many levels of aggression progression and learn new and more irritating moves to use on workmates, friends and family.

CUTTINGS

WHEN AND HOW MUCH

Does the wireless keypad for the SIXAXIS have an official release date for Aus, and how much will it cost?

Simmo, via email

It should be out by the time you're reading this, at the price of \$79.95

PERFECT TIMING

I reckon it would be fantastic to have a section on game developers and how they came to be. What do you think?

Shaun, via email

We think it was such a good idea that we actually started working on it, before we got this letter. Great minds think alike.

THUMBS UP

Have to say I love the new design of the mag. You and the guys and girls at OPS have done a great job. Big thumbs up from me.

Matt, via email

Aw, shucks Mr Matt. Really? Tell us more about how great we are. We've said it before, and we'll say it again – Phill, you're a goddamn genius.

SPEAK TO US

Love the mag? Hate the mag? We want your opinions and questions on OPS, on games – on anything that you feel the need to share with your fellow readers. The best letter of each issue wins the Game of the Month! Write to us on paper or on a computer at:

OPS Feedback
Derwent Howard
PO Box 1037
Bondi Junction, NSW 1355
ops@derwenthoward.com.au

The legendary feature, 'it should be a game', is back by popular demand! Naturally, since we just brought it back an' all, we haven't received that many entries as of yet. That's where you come in. Send us all your game ideas, funny, serious, insane or otherwise to ops@derwenthoward.com.au. If you happen to have any 'mad Photoshop skillz' then flex those muscles and send us some pics to go with it. It'll make your entry all the more sweet (and reduce Phill's legendary workload). Get cracking people!

COMPETITIONS

Massive Giveaway

ONE WHO TAKES

OMG!

Yes, one person wins everything:

A 40G PS3, *Quantum of Solace: The Game*, *Mortal Kombat vs DC Universe*, limited edition *Prince of Persia*, limited edition *Far Cry 2*, *SmackDown Vs. Raw 09*, *Tomb Raider Underworld*, *Mirror's Edge*, *BioShock*, *TNA iMPACT!*, *MotoGP 08*, *Hellboy II: The Golden Army*, walkthrough guides for *EndWar*, *Prince of Persia* and *Tomb Raider Underworld*, a *Mirror's Edge* bag, and much more.

To win, head to www.gameplayer.com.au/competitions and tell us in 25 words or less why you're a PlayStation fanboy

GAMEPLAYER CODE WORD:
SINGSTAR

PLAYSTATION 3



INNER

T TALL!



COMPETITIONS

Massive Giveaway



FLAWLESS VICTORY!

The epic union of Sub-Zero, Scorpion and Sonya Blade with Batman, The Joker and Wonder Woman has arrived. From story mode to rage mode, *Mortal Kombat Vs. DC Universe* is here to fill the void. We have 10 copies of this epic game to give away.

To win, head to www.gameplayer.com.au/competitions and tell us in 25 words or less who you would choose to help you complete a flawless victory

GAMEPLAYER CODE WORD:
TOASTIES

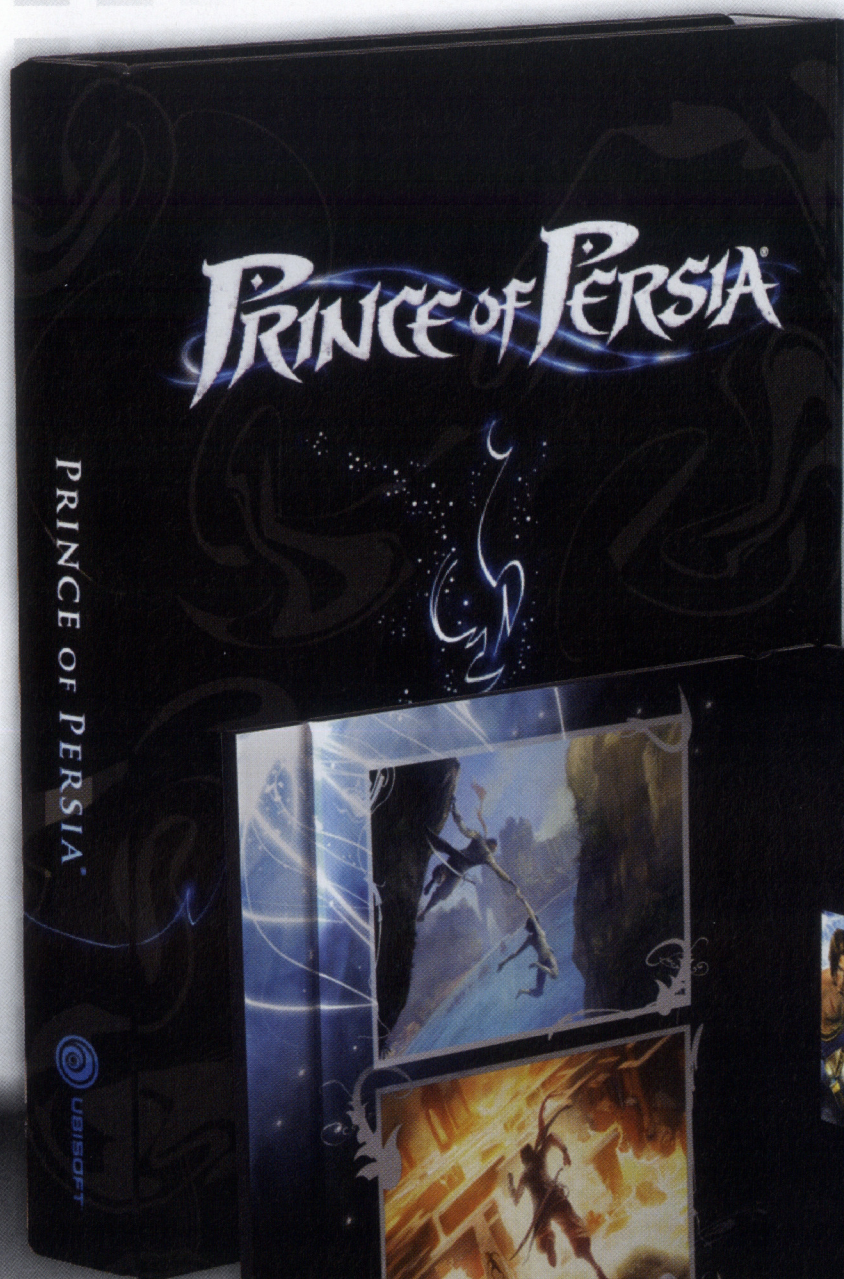
RAIDED!

We didn't think it fair to leave you hanging, so we've got 10 copies of *Tomb Raider Underworld* and a very well shaped Lara Croft figurine for readers who are ready to tackle an adventure.

To win, head to www.gameplayer.com.au/competitions and tell us in 25 words or less which *Tomb Raider* will stand the sands of time.

GAMEPLAYER CODE WORD:
TOMB





THE PRINCE RETURNS

We're massive fans of the Prince and the latest interaction has had many fans drooling. We couldn't let the opportunity to grab some copies for our readers of this magnificent game pass us by. One winner will receive the limited edition *Prince of Persia* disc and a PSN code for *PoP Classic*. With 14 runners-up snaring *Prince of Persia* and a PSN code to download *Prince of Persia Classic*.

To win, head to www.gameplayer.com.au/ competitions and tell us in 25 words or less who is your favourite Prince, fictional or real, and why.

**GAMEPLAYER CODE WORD:
CLASSIC**



COMPETITIONS

Massive Giveaway



JAMES?

Ah, Bond! He may not chase as many ladies or sink as many martinis in the latest flick, but there is a lot of action, which makes for a full-on game. We have 10 copies of *Quantum of Solace: The Game* to give away to readers, so you too can don the suit and chase through the sewers of Italy, jet into South America and tackle Austria.

To win, head to www.gameplayer.com.au/competitions and tell us in 25 words or less who is the ultimate Bond and why.

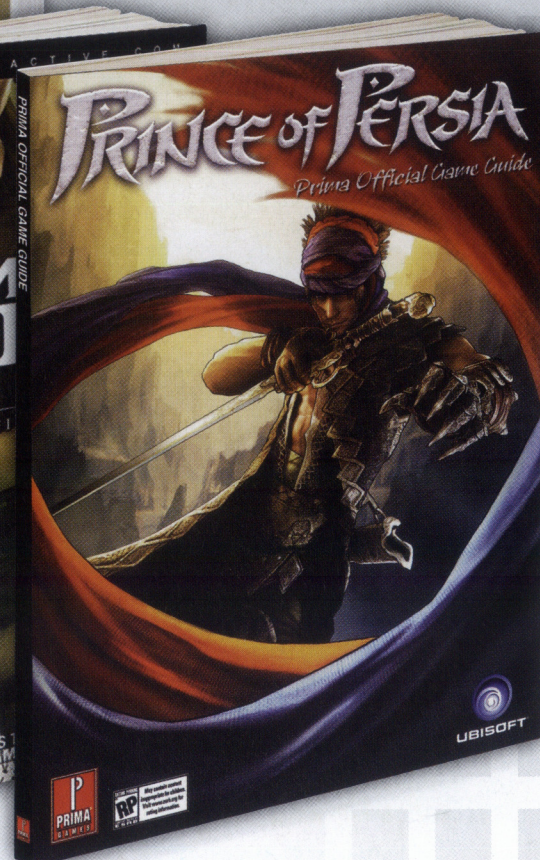
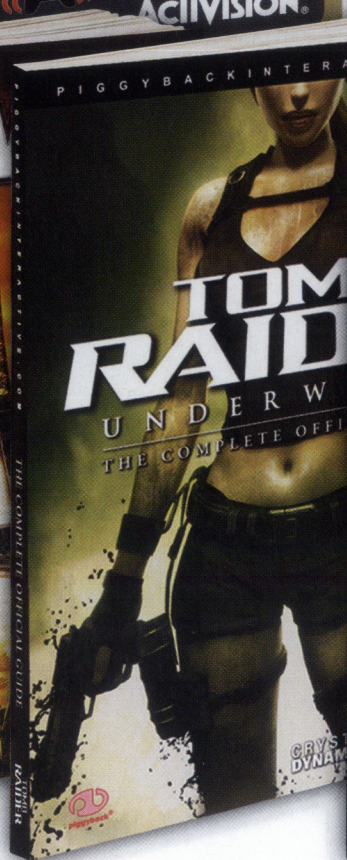
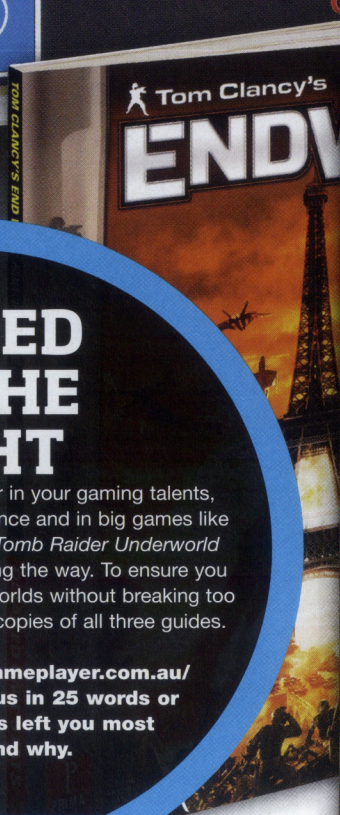
GAMEPLAYER CODE WORD:
QUANTUM

GUIDED BY THE LIGHT

Yes, we know you are superior in your gaming talents, but ultimately some need guidance and in big games like *EndWar*, *Prince of Persia* and *Tomb Raider Underworld* it helps to have a little help along the way. To ensure you make your way through these worlds without breaking too many controllers we've got 10 copies of all three guides.

To win, head to www.gameplayer.com.au/competitions and tell us in 25 words or less which game has left you most frustrated and why.

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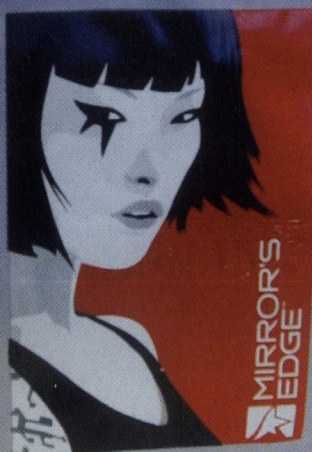
WALKING THE EDGE

Mirror's Edge is known for its style, flair and fast paced action. It allows you to string together an amazing arsenal of wall-runs, leaps, vaults and more, in fluid, acrobatic movements that turn every level of the urban environment to your advantage.

To style you up we have a limited edition *Mirror's Edge* bag along with a copy of the game for five readers.

To win, head to www.gameplayer.com.au/competitions and tell us in 25 words or less where you would like to see a parkour game set.

GAMEPLAYER CODE WORD:
FAITH

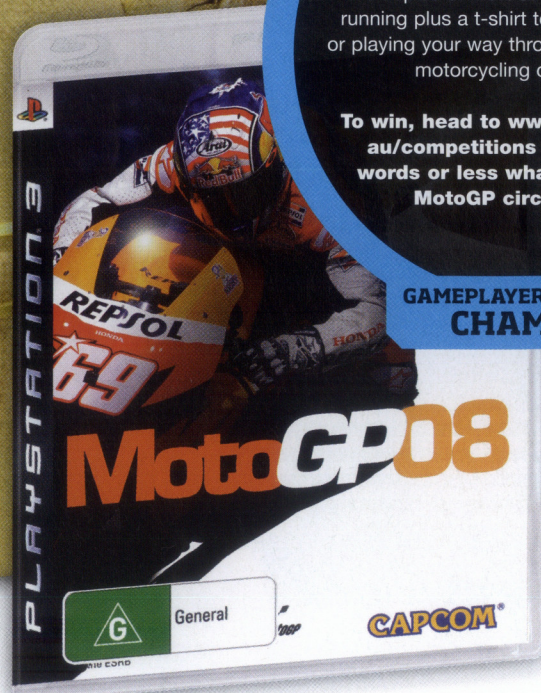


THE FALLOUT

With all that friction on the world stage we're more than a little worried about your safety. So we've gathered five bomb shelter packs from *Fallout 3* containing limited edition figurine and edible goodies in a satchel.

To win, head to www.gameplayer.com.au/competitions and tell us in 25 words or less where you would build a fallout shelter.

GAMEPLAYER CODE WORD:
THREE



VROOM!

MotoGP fans, you're in luck, we have five copies of *MotoGP 08* to get your motor running plus a t-shirt to wear while watching or playing your way through the world's premier motorcycling championship.

To win, head to www.gameplayer.com.au/competitions and tell us in 25 words or less what's your favourite MotoGP circuit and why.

GAMEPLAYER CODE WORD:
CHAMPION

COMPETITIONS

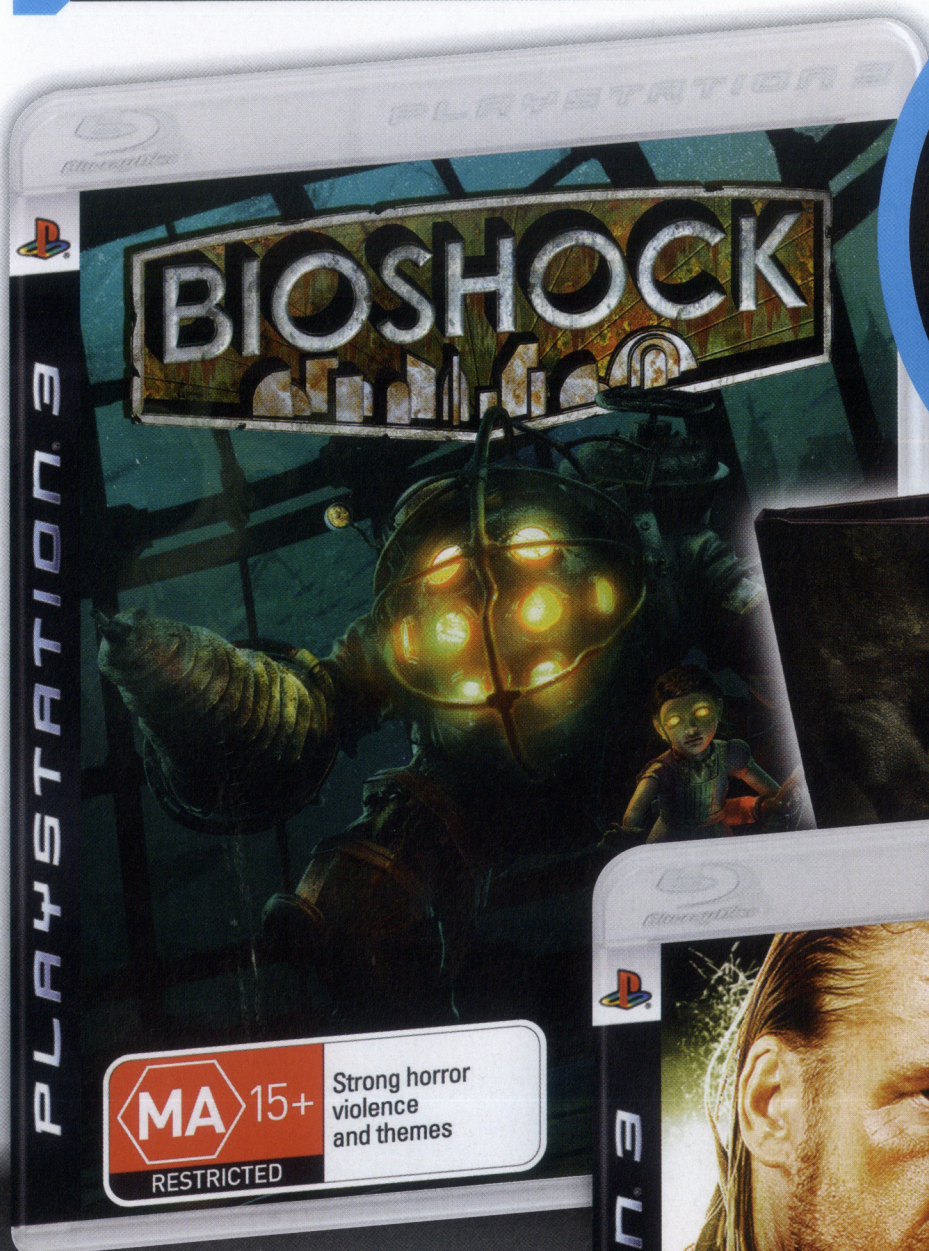
Massive Giveaway

HEY LITTLE SISTER!

If you don't have this game in your collection then your assortment is incomplete. *BioShock* takes you into an exciting world filled with fascinating characters, intelligent enemies and complex moral choices. It's also downright terrifying. Five readers will win a copy of *BioShock* on PlayStation 3, a *BioShock* t-shirt and a Limited Edition Art Book.

To win, head to www.gameplayer.com.au/competitions and tell us in 25 words or less what scares you most and why.

GAMEPLAYER CODE WORD:
DADDY

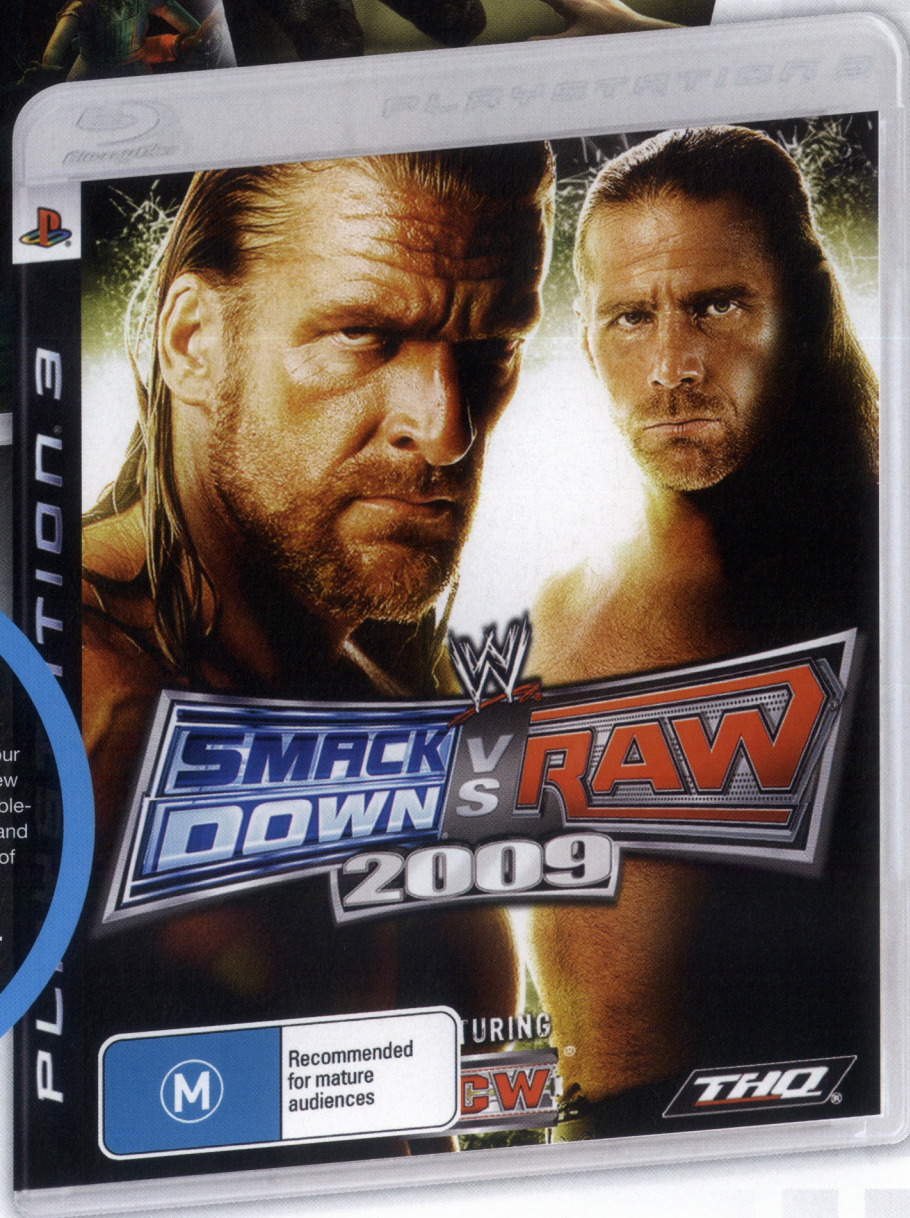


RAW TOURNAMENT!

It's time to tag your way into the ring to win your copy of *WWE SmackDown vs Raw 09*, with new tag team mechanics, featuring high impact double-team moves, a create your own finisher mode and an all new inferno match. We have 10 copies of *WWE SmackDown vs Raw 09* up for grabs.

To win, head to www.gameplayer.com.au/competitions and tell us in 25 words or less which wrestler should be champ.

GAMEPLAYER CODE WORD:
CENA





GOLDEN ARMY

Everything's turning up golden this month with our favourite red hero trouncing a 70 x 70 strong magical mechanical army of soldiers. Hellboy makes his return in *Hellboy II: The Golden Army* available to own on DVD now. To celebrate the DVD release from Universal we have three limited edition packs including:

- *Hellboy II: The Golden Army* limited edition box set featuring collectable figurine, DVD special edition and director's journal.
- *Hellboy II: The Golden Army* coffee table book
- Universal Pictures Blu-ray pack with five titles.

Five runners-up will receive *Hellboy II: The Golden Army* DVD and *Hellboy II: The Golden Army* coffee table book.

To win, head to www.gameplayer.com.au/competitions and tell us in 25 words or less who you would choose to form your army.

GAMEPLAYER CODE WORD:
ABE

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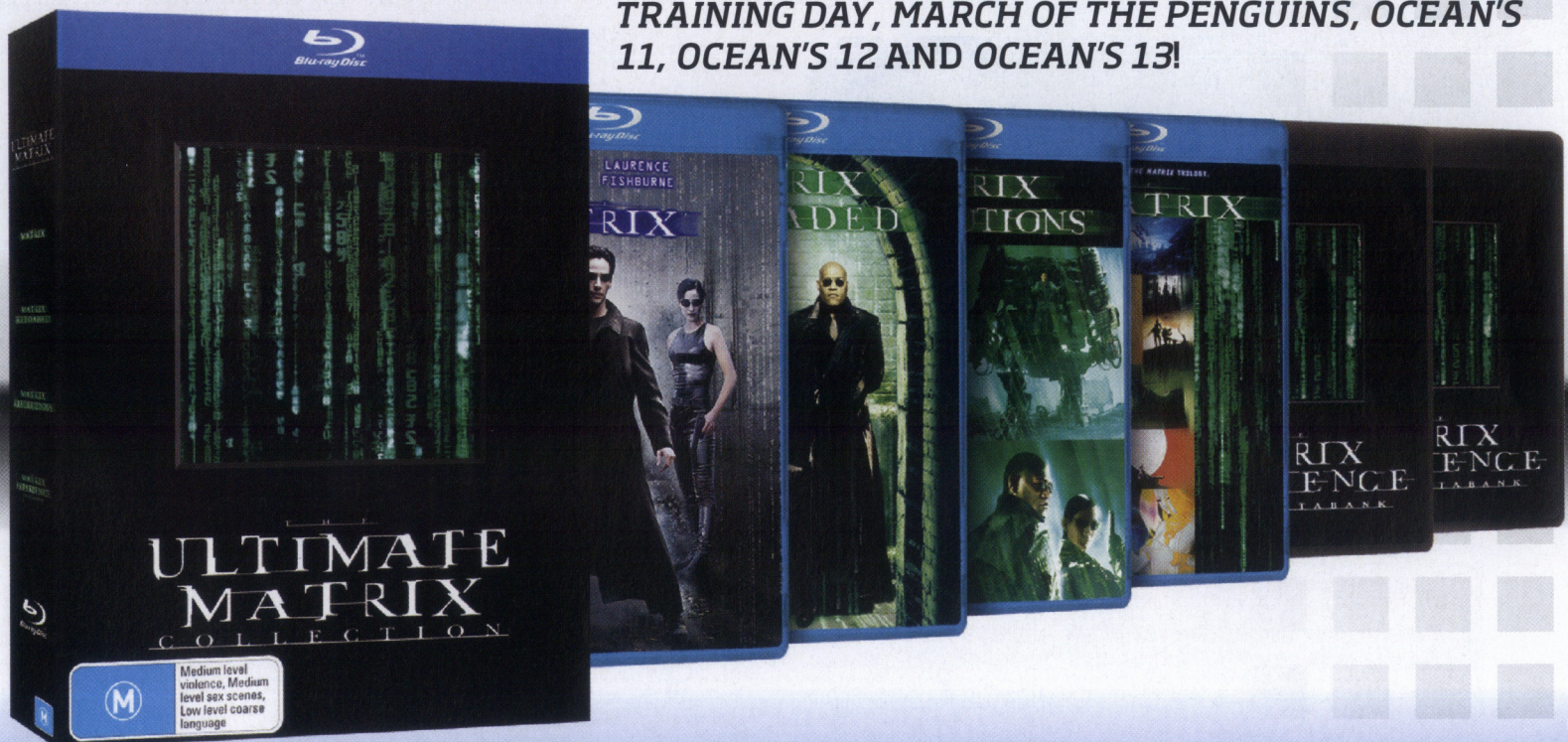
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To enter Official PlayStation competitions log on to www.gameplayer.com.au/competitions or send your entries with the name of the competition CLEARLY marked to OPS competitions PO BOX 1037, Bondi Junction 1355. Please include your name, age and address with your answer on the back of an envelope. Chance plays no part in determining winners. Competitions open 22/11/2008 and close 21/01/2009. Winners will be notified by mail and names displayed at www.gameplayer.com.au

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A STORM IS RISING

Real time strategy games have had a bit of a bum rap when it comes to consoles – the main issue being the ‘ye olde’ clunky controller. Has The Creative Assembly solved the problem?

The RTS genre is dying. The RTS genre is alive and well. She hates RTS, he loves them. Ask any gamer, in or out of the industry, about real time strategy and you'll get radically different ideas and opinions about the games, excepting one unifying idea: RTS is bollocks on a console. The mouse, hotkey, micromanaging clickety click that defines an RTS just doesn't work on a control pad. Plus multiplayer on RTS involves waiting around in lobbies for new games to start. You can't just drop into a game like you can a shooter. Everybody knows that...

Except for Brisbane studio Creative Assembly. These are the guys who pretty much perfected the genre with the *Total War* series. So when they say they've got something that will change the face of real-time strategy, they're people to take seriously. With

the upcoming release of *Stormrise*, they claim to have solved both problems. Not only that, they believe their game is an improvement over mouse and keyboard RTS control. It's a big damn claim but, well, they very well might be able to do just that.

ON THE CHARGE

Stormrise doesn't look like a traditional RTS at all. Making one in 3D isn't exactly new, but there's an emphasis on smaller squads that you view in close. At first, it's quite disconcerting to be homing in close on small squads. After all, the genre is based on managing whole armies, ensuring supply lines are safe and resources are capped. We were dubious at best concerning not only the ability to play an RTS, but this one looked to be quite claustrophobic. Our concerns were easily allayed.

"This," says Vispi Bhopti, a

spokesman for the studio, "is bloody amazing."

How do you replace the mouse and keyboard on a console? And even if you do, how can it be as good, accurate and as fast?

Then, with a flick of the thumb, the camera whirled across the battlefield onto the next unit. "It's called 'Whip Select'. It's more accurate than mouse and keyboard."

Quickly, troops are moved, given orders and then suddenly the camera, well, whips rapidly to the next unit. Within the space of perhaps five seconds, seven or eight troops have been selected, without error, without having to move onto a mini-map interface or punching at a hot key. It's one of those ideas that are so simple, so useful and so effective that you can only wonder why it hasn't been thought of before.



QUICK WHIP

That's the quick whip. The precise whip is where directional beams locate your other units, including those you cannot see. It will give you details on how far away they are, allow you to issue controls and help you decide which unit you are next going to whip to.

It sounds so very basic, and it is, but do not mistake simplicity for poor execution. The whipping technique is very fast, very accurate and introduces three distinct elements into the game.

For one, 'Fog of War' is gone. The false obscuring of a battlefield is no longer

needed as the whip mechanic only allows for line of sight gameplay anyway. If you can't see, you can't see it.

The second is verticality. See, *Stormrise* is a true three dimensional game, something that may be unique. Pretty much every RTS is rendered in 3D these days, with lots of options to zoom around the world, but very few really play out on more than a horizontal plane. The levels demonstrated clearly showed that you have to think in three dimensions to win it. Soldiers and units run up stairs, holding higher ground, hiding out from aircraft. Hero units leap from rooftops

and down to the streets. Other units lay in ambush in tunnels, waiting for enemies to pass overhead. Battlefields are riddled with tunnels, allowing you to sneak under battlelines. There's been nothing like it in the genre – because you're looking out from the eyes of your units, you'll have to be aware of rooftop crossfires.

"We have mechanics in place for crossfires, ambushes, covering fire, all that sort of stuff. You'll have to be aware that attacks can come from anywhere."

The third

new element is perhaps the strongest side effect of the Whip, and it's an odd mash-up of first-person shooter elements. This isn't an FPS, but you have the speed, the twitch factor in moving around a battlefield, having to be aware of attacks from above, behind, below as well as full frontals – all tactics never used in an RTS, but they are well-known to the shooter crowd. That isn't to say it's some sort of hybrid game – that would not be quite correct. It's still an RTS, but the addition of verticality, of real 3D, means that suddenly you have to use spatial awareness skills





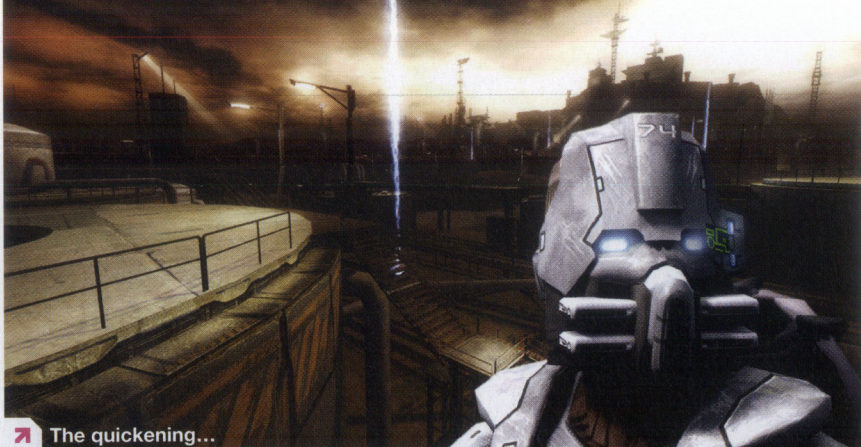
Fighting a big spider guy. Really, why would you do that?



It can do the Kessel Run in eleven parsecs – suck on that Han Solo!



This game – it's full of bugs (it's late, give me a break!)



➤ The quickening...



➤ These guys: they have the best 'jazz hands' in the business



as well as the long term strategies, short term thinking RTS players use.

RENOVATED

The other bit of revolutionary thinking from Creative Assembly is again simple, but tremendously effective. While RTS games have traditionally been very big on sweeping war stories and dense narratives, they are often best played multiplayer. Even on PC formats, there is one particular problem with these games and online gameplay: waiting. To start a two-on-two battle requires two new players to be ready at the same time. Four or, heaven forbid, eight players can mean hours of waiting around in a lobby. *Stormrise* further takes from the FPS genre by allowing not only co-op and one on one battles, but a simple drop in.

"That's why a lot of console players never got into RTS games. It's boring to wait around," says Ken Turner, the project director. "When we were designing the game, we asked, 'What can we learn from shooters?'," and that speed of getting into games was one of them. We've got it figured out that you can jump into any game, at any time, and still be effective, still affect your own ranking." It's more than just competition.

"You and a mate can train, doing things like turning the AI up to insane and seeing how you perform together. Private

matches, training scenarios, all those sorts of things are possible."

There is a strong backstory and single-player mode to be experienced. A climate catastrophe forced a good population of the world into hibernation – but not all of them. After centuries in a world wracked by superstorms, a section of humanity has evolved into strange, psychic warriors, who use the similarly changed wildlife as beasts of war. Waking up, the Echelon are looking to retake the world

back from their eerily changed cousins. It's a war between those who see themselves as retaking their home and those who see only abandoning interlopers. Sympathies won't be made clear, they're greys rather than blacks and whites.

Meanwhile, the Earth is still in ruin. The maps, the armies, all reflect this fundamental clash of beliefs,



STORMIN' QUEEN

There are about a dozen different units per faction in *Stormrise*. Surprisingly, there isn't an attempt to balance out the units in a traditional sense. Turner comments, "We didn't think about things in terms of, if these guys have a heavy tank at this level of production, those guys have to have an equivalent tank at the same time." Each one of the units has a 'playbook', special moves and powers, like the Sai Broodqueen. She can breed weak swarm units that whittle away other units' health. Whereas Echelon tanks can transform into fixed position armour, like a mortar.

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Gaming experience
may change online



PLAYSTATION 3

➤ This is what happens when you don't use weed killer



➤ We had a spider this big in our kitchen. I killed it. Because I'm rad!

cultures and styles. The sky still churns. Santana pauses from a battle to show a roiling, tearing sky above. "There's a reason a lot of these battles happen under the ground. You don't want to be in the open in a storm."

ASSEMBLED TALENT

The studio has some big name talents working for it, but there are two peculiar hires that have added rather unique input, from particularly hardcore quarters. Andy

Pender has a list of competitive game wins, which space prohibits listing, but amongst the highlights are three wins in the World Cyber Games Australia and third place in the WCG

in Asia, the toughest league in the world for *Warcraft 3: The Frozen Throne*, one of the twitchiest RTS games ever made. Santana Mishra has represented Australia many times, including being routinely ranked number one on the infamously competitive Battle.net league, ranking seventh in the Xi'an China world finals for *Warcraft 3* and a win for the *Sierra World in Conflict* tournament. These are guys that know the RTS genre inside and out. "Yeah," says Santana, "I've never had an experience playing a game like *Stormrise*. It plays out like a regular RTS, although it doesn't look like a traditional one." Santana demonstrates the game at a pace humans can appreciate, then his natural instincts kick in. We've seen extraordinary RTS players before, but we've never seen them

move with the kinds of precision with which Santana moves. Is it him or the game? "Well, I go pretty fast but, you know, with the Whip, it's just so quick to move around."

While hardcore gamers can appreciate a game like this, there's a worry that it might go over the top. So what wins? Twitch or strategy? "There are two ways it can go," says Turner. "Obviously, a balance of both is required. You have to play fast. But the way our maps are designed, the way that units are balanced... you'll also need to plan out crossfires and other tactical moves. This isn't a game where you can just throw troops into a situation."

Is it easy for newbs to pick up? With an effacing shrug, Santana understates, "I'm pretty good at RTS, but people can pick up the console and give me a pretty hard game."

2009 is looking to be a big year for the RTS on consoles. *Halo Wars*, using an inbuilt fan base, promises clean controls, and *EndWar* brings the conquering Tom Clancy name and small scope to the field, but *Stormrise* looks like the RTS to beat. It's still relatively early days yet, with the studio only recently entering the final crunch – the builds on display still need a fair amount of work, but the Whip mechanism is a powerful one. Again, it's too early to throw around words like 'genre-breaking,' even with a studio as confident and tested as Creative Assembly.

If *Stormrise* lives up to the early promise, this one may have classic written all over it. A whole new way to look at an old kind of game. 🐱

MAKING A COVER

We'd like to thank Nick Smith of The Creative Assembly for the weeks of work put into this issues cover.



Concept

Twelve concept sketches about an inch high were provided to us.



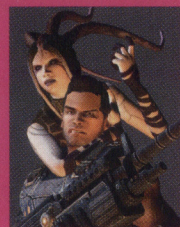
Rough

Once one was chosen, a larger sketch was created to give us more of an idea.



Final approval?

Approaching final sign-off, it doesn't look like the image will be striking enough!



Quick change

We go back to the drawing board in order to capture the essence of the game.



Finally!

Angles changed, hair adjusted and we have the cover image. Thankfully!

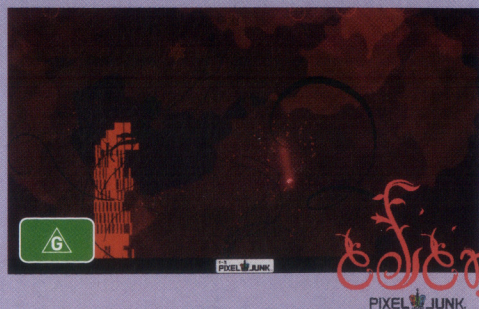
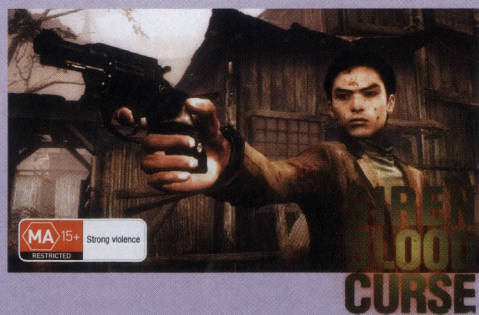
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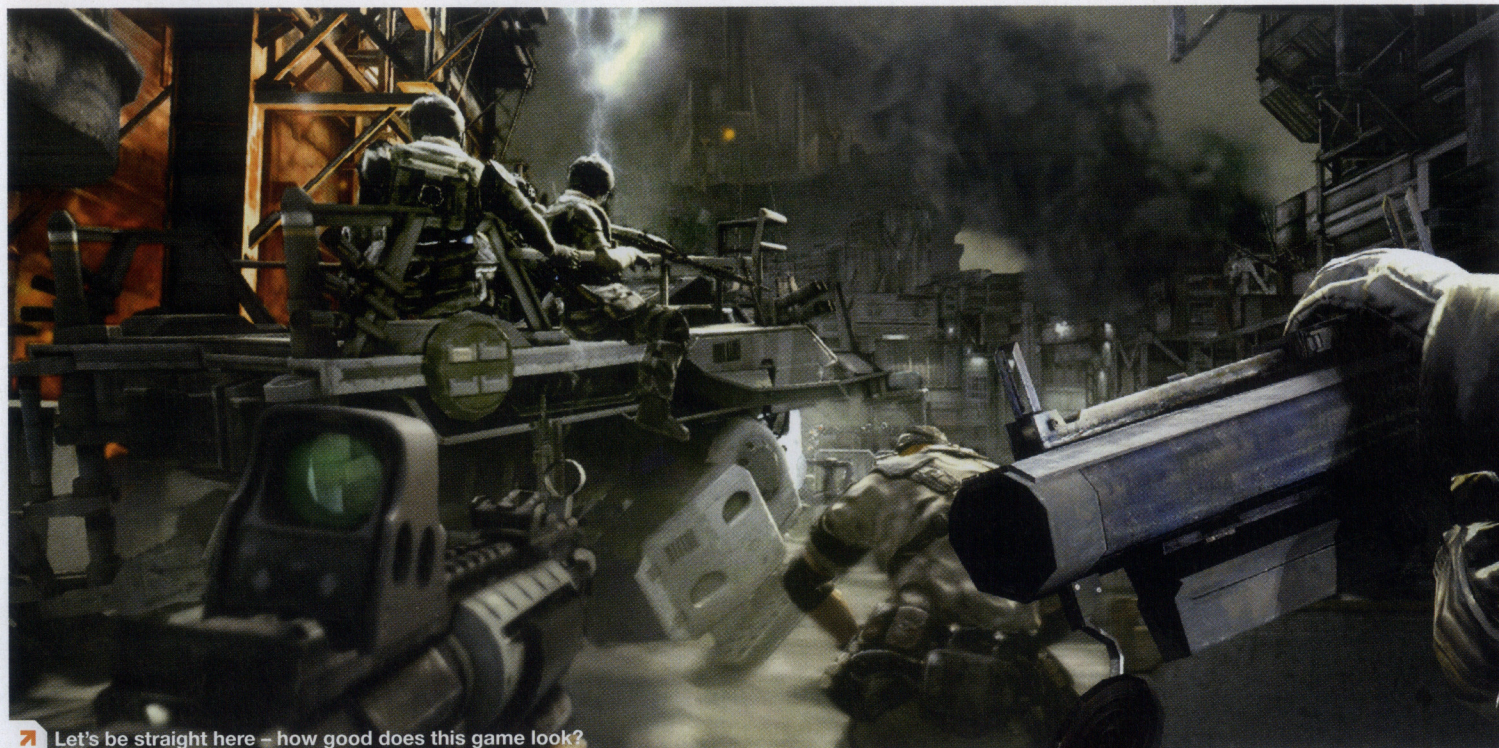


PLAYSTATION 3

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Exclusive looks at the very best



Let's be straight here – how good does this game look?



PS3 GENRE: SHOOTER | RELEASE: FEBRUARY 2008 | DISTRIBUTOR: SONY | DEVELOPER: GUERRILLA GAMES

KILLZONE 2

Killing in the name of...

IT'S LIKE...

Call of Duty 4



Dirt

We have all sorts in our offices. Those that play games fervently (us, obviously), those that love the precise, rigorous thrills of mouse and keyboard PC gaming, those that love their consoles, those that stick to *Brain Training*, *Wii Sports* and *Peggle*, and those who simply don't give a crap about video games period.

But one fine morning those gamers and non-gamers all gathered around – from far and wide they watched, jaws agape in a trancelike state, and stood transfixed. They had one thing in common, one reason for huddling around our Bravia like it was some primitive stone carved God – they were hypnotised by the visual

strength and technical might of *Killzone 2*.

And boy oh boy, is it a nice looking game. We rarely get crowds around our gaming TV, but when we do it's indicative of one very important phenomenon – one that sells games and, if you're lucky, sells consoles. It's called word of mouth, and it's our view that what happens in our microcosm of an office reflects what will happen in the wider world.

Here's how it went down: one guy strolls over, spits out his coffee flabbergasted and asks – “bloody hell, what's this?” “*Killzone 2*” we tell him.

Said chap then walks/runs over to his desk buddy and drags him by the collar to show what he has just witnessed. This

desk buddy then grabs another, does the same thing, and rinse and repeat this process until there's an epic crowd watching this technical masterpiece unfold. If it can happen in our office, then it can happen in 'real life'. As a result of this we believe that *Killzone 2* is a very good advertisement for the potential power of the PlayStation 3.

BEAUTY IS THE BEAST

In short, *Killzone 2* 'tis a beast. It may be the result of the PS3's processing power finally being harnessed by a developer with



44 UFC
We check out this promising fighter. Buff, tough, rough, unstoppable.



45 Bionic Commando
That Commando – don't mind him, he's 'armless.



46 Legends of WrestleMania
A nostalgic trot through the annals of WWE history.



48 Red Faction
Hammer your way through Mars in this promising title.



50 50 Cent
You can find him in the club. In the Middle East, for some reason!



RED EYE

You'd think it might be a bit tough to spot the Helghast in amongst the gritty colour scheme that makes up the majority of *Killzone 2*, but it's not. The bad guys populating the battlefield are all sporting red eyes, which is basically an intelligent way of making them easier to spot.

"War is hell. But it also smells like a Barbecue, which is nice...!"

the time/money to exploit the hardware correctly, or it may be the result of an extremely intelligent art design, but to our trained eye, *Killzone 2* is a direct, visual cut above all in its genre. The detail is phenomenal.

Environments are packed with the sort of minutiae that serves to engross you in a world that is admittedly familiar (the gritty sci-fi shooter isn't exactly a new idea...) but trumps its predecessors in every way imaginable.

This may be the future, but it isn't a clean, hyper-real shooter ala *Halo*, it's far dirtier, and

in many ways owes more to games in the WW2 genre than science fiction. The gun scopes are smeared with soot and grime, explosions result in dust showers, and the environments are a deteriorated mess of rust and destruction. It looks absolutely incredible.

But you knew that already. *Killzone 2* was always destined to be one of the prettiest games on the market – how it plays was the topic in contention. Thankfully, however, this time round, Guerrilla Games seems to have gotten this aspect of *Killzone* spectacularly right.

UM, COULD YOU REPEAT THAT PLEASE?

But first off, the problems – they are

KILLING ZONES: BLOOD GRACHT

This show-off map really gives the *Killzone 2* engine time to shine, and is probably the prettiest of the three maps. There's not much room to breathe in this one, which forces players to focus more on close encounters with the enemy.

After terrorists bombed the North Pole, Santa joined the Resistance



"Man, this is the future, you think ropes would be cooler by now."

admittedly few and easily overlooked, but we still feel the need to highlight them. The main issue is in terms of how the linear mission structure is presented – in *Call of Duty 4*, for example, the spectacular, linear set-piece missions are seamlessly presented. You're never in any doubt with regards to what you have to do next, or what your objective is.

Killzone 2 doesn't have that same, tight sense of structure. On plenty of occasions we found ourselves completely clueless with regards to what we were supposed to be doing next, all because we missed one minor spoken clue by one of teammates in the midst of absolute chaos. Our recommendation – leave the subtitles on.

The second main issue is with regards to how aiming works. The system that Guerrilla Games has employed is both a

blessing and a curse – it's clear that, in this area, *Killzone 2* shoots for realism over functionality.

STOP BLOODY MOVING!

Because *Killzone 2* adheres to the old *Rainbow Six* expanding reticule thing, unless you're scoped, it's pretty tough to take aim at anything without standing still. Even then players will have to pump the trigger to retain accuracy, and the reticule sways and moves realistically, hindering your chances of hitting what you *thought* you were aiming at.

It's clearly a deliberate attempt by Guerrilla Games to increase the immersion of *Killzone 2* by adding realism to the aiming mechanics – and it works, giving *Killzone 2* a claustrophobic sense of panic, of having to line up and time your

shots carefully – but fans used to having an unrealistically steady aim may rue this design choice and find it inconsistent.

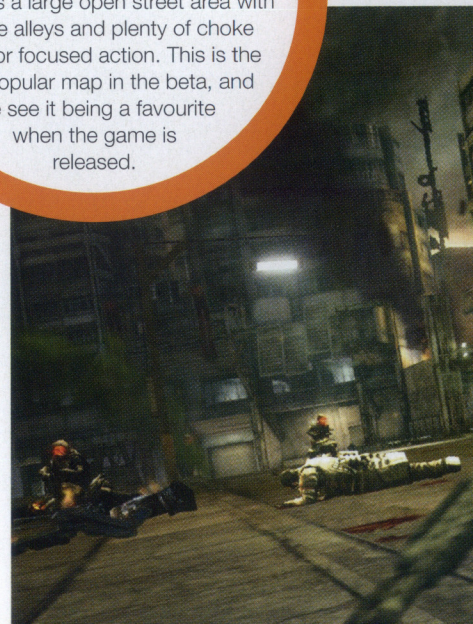
However, even if you do have a problem with the aiming in *Killzone 2*, it's in absolutely no way a game breaker, and despite the fact that it can cause frustration, no one could deny the incredible experience that *Killzone 2*'s single player provides.

Killzone 2 takes advantage of its linear level structure to create what is, for our money, one of the best paced shooters we've ever played. Guerrilla Games has done a good job of making sure that the environments, and the type of gunfights you're partaking in, constantly vary throughout each level. Sometimes you'll be



KILLING ZONES: SALAMUN MARKET

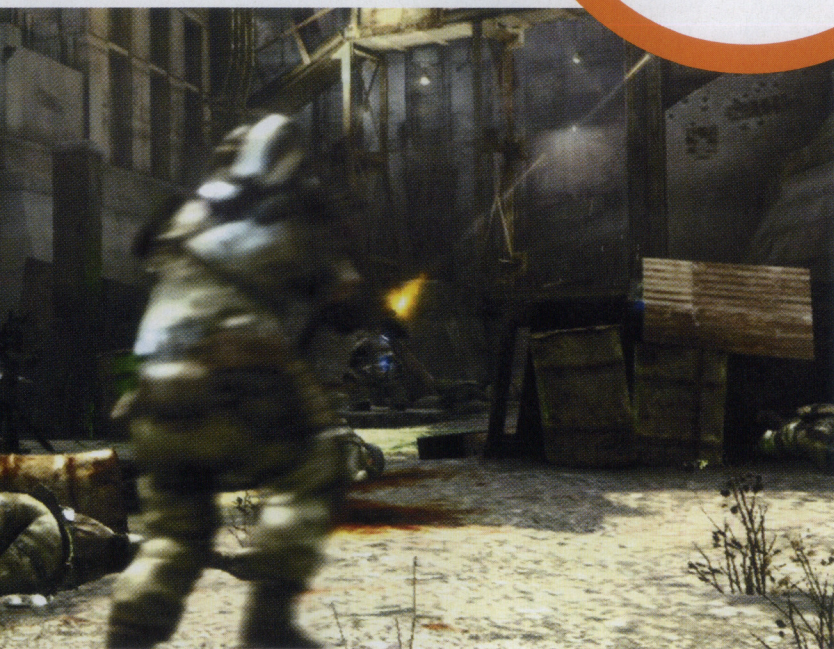
An epic map clearly designed for hectic 32-player matches, Salamun Market combines a large open street area with intricate alleys and plenty of choke points for focused action. This is the most popular map in the beta, and we see it being a favourite when the game is released.





KILLING ZONES: **RADEC ACADEMY**

Our favourite. A tightly designed map flexible enough to maintain multiple different game types, Radek mixes up open areas with tight corridors and great lines of fire. This map recalls some of the great maps from other top shooters like *Call of Duty 4*.



sneaking through tight corridor sections, before bolting out into a large scale open war. Other times you'll be trying to break through a tight Helghast base setup, and often the shoe will be on the other foot and you'll be defending yourself from an enemy onslaught.

SPIT AND POLISH

As a game, *Killzone 2*, despite the fact that it's months from release, is a remarkably polished experience. It could hardly be expected to run as smoothly as the superlative *CoD* titles (given the insane amount of environmental detail) but the frame rate is solid and consistent, no matter how intense the onscreen action becomes.

And although it's extremely easy to praise *Killzone 2*'s lush visuals, the clear

WANTON DESTRUCTION

While *Killzone 2* doesn't feature the kind of game-changing destruction seen in games such as *Battlefield* or *Red Faction: Guerrilla*, there are elements of the environment that will explode in a rather awesome manner – even in the multiplayer. In the single player this leads to some rather spiffy set-pieces that look and feel fantastic.



“TAKE COVER!” “Um... from what?” “That cloud over there. It looks like rain, boys.”

matter of fact is that they add to the immersion and ‘wow’ factor of the game exponentially. Your eyes *will* bleed.

When a Helghast trooper charges towards you, and you run out of bullets to perforate his organs with, before meleeing him in the cranium, there's an intense feeling that everything is just working on a visual level not seen in any first person shooter to date.

The animations, of both your melee attack and the Helghast trooper as he reels dazed from your blunt blow, are staggeringly detailed and ring perfectly true – witnessing such a thing early on in your playthrough will figuratively blow your mind.

In many ways *Killzone 2* seems to be a cut above any game seen this gen. It's hard not to recall a game like *Resident Evil 4* – a title that was next gen before next

gen even existed – in the way that it seems to, from a technical standpoint, work on a level beyond its peers.

We'll wait for the final game to make our judgements of course – the game isn't perfect... yet – but with *Killzone 2*, we could very well be on the verge of greatness. **Mark Serrels**

WE SAY

- ↑ Incredible visuals
- ↑ Insanely detailed
- ↓ Aiming may frustrate

OPS IS...
in the zone



IT'S LIKE...

Skate



Mana...



7 This guy is far too preppy to be skateboarding, back to Harvard with thee!

PS3 GENRE: SPORTS | RELEASE: JAN 2009 | DISTRIBUTOR: EA | DEVELOPER: BLACK BOX

SKATE 2

SKATE or cry?

When it comes to judging videogames, have we media types got it all out of whack? Newly appointed EA exec Peter Moore certainly thinks so. According to Mr Moore sports games get a bit of a raw deal when it comes to reviews and coverage, and to be perfectly honest, we kinda agree.

Epic, single player experiences, the kind seen in games like *GTA*, *MGS*, *CoD* et al, are generally scored higher than your *FIFAs*, your *Pro Evos*, titles that – despite being sports games – are the absolute tip top barometer of quality within their genre.

Even your supposedly 'hardcore' gamers are just as guilty as us – ask them what games they're looking forward to next year, and you'll get a round robin of bog-standard replies: *Resident Evil 5*, *God of War 3*, the next *GTA* game, etc, etc.

Few will claim they're fervently waiting for a sports game of any kind.

And the reason for this pointless, meandering intro? Well, we've just played a 'sports' game and it crossed our minds that said title looked, played and felt better than anything we've played in a long, long time. Our experience was so seamless that it has shot to the top of our most wanted games of 2009. We think about it every waking moment and it haunts our sleep – we think it's got a damn good shot at being a contender for game of the year. We're talking, of course, about *SKATE 2*.

GETTING STARTED

Getting our dirty, sweaty, fanboy fingers upon *SKATE 2*, we slid the disc into the slot with feverish anticipation. Instantly the gap between the sequel and its predecessor was clearly apparent. Creating



7 She'll be skating down the mountain when she comes...



LITTLEBIGSKATE

User created content is *the* major buzzword these days and having helped create that bandwagon with the original *SKATE*, the sequel has pushed things to the next level. Now, with the ability to transform San Vanelona to suit your skating needs, players can upload their own version of the game to others, like so:

STEP 1 CREATE

Using the 'grab the world' button, players can move objects around to create their own skating spot.



STEP 2 UPLOAD

You can now upload this newly created spot to the web, making it available for other players to download online



STEP 3 SHARE

Now others can download, and automatically readjust their San Vanelona to match the spot you just created previously.



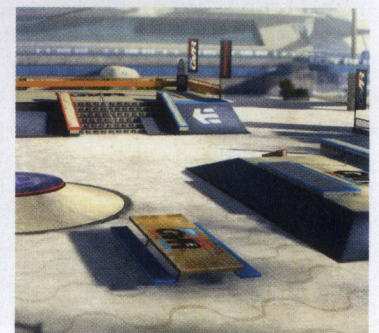
Hats covering eyes - surly



your own, personalised skater is infinitely more in-depth, and almost at the level of games such as *The Sims* and *Spore*, for which customisation is the major bullet point in *SKATE 2*.

Hopping onto the board for the first time, after darting through a quick warm-up tutorial, the game feels as familiar as ever. Everything you loved about *SKATE* has remained and within seconds you'll be tricking in the exact same manner as you did before in the original.

But then something happens. Just like the original, which featured a pitch perfect learning curve, slowly you'll begin to add new tricks to your repertoire - you'll dare to try a handplant, maybe a finger flip here and there. Before you know it you'll be hippie jumping over rails, running headlong into insane drops and leaping onto the board with aplomb.



Those that felt *SKATE 2* might be a 'more of the same' deal, the kind of game veterans could hop into and master within seconds, well... it's not. The development team has been wise enough to create not just a new bag of tricks, but entire new mechanics - mechanics that can be moulded and adapted in numerous different ways, in numerous situations.

PEACE AND LOVE

Take the hippie jumps for example. Incorporating the 'feet' button mechanic, you can leap off the board by pushing the **X** and **O** buttons simultaneously. But that's not all folks - while you're in the air, you can use the analogue sticks, that control the body, to pull off 180 turns whilst doing hippie jumps. Apparently it's possible to pull off a hippie flip - but we haven't managed to pull it off just yet.

INCOMING

SKATE 2

GRABS

Grabs function in much the same way as before – but a new set of tricks can be conjured by pushing different foot buttons and grabs at the same time.

FEET

The 'feet' buttons, which were previously used to push the board, are now used to take your feet off the board, allowing for a new range of tricks.

PLANT-IT

One of the most obvious additions to *SKATE 2* is the hand-plant, which allows you to grab ledges when skating vert. This uses the 'grab the world' button (L1) which is also used to manipulate the environment. The overriding idea is that L1 serves as a 'hand' button, fitting seamlessly into *SKATE*'s control system.

What we're getting at here is just how integrated and seamless the control system remains. Despite the fact that *SKATE 2* adds numerous new mechanics, each and every one of them works in tandem with the old ones, and actually utilises that firm base to propel itself to further greatness.

SKATE 2 balances itself expertly on the shoulders of its predecessor. No one feature ever feels tacked on and, as always, everything simply feels right.

NEW SAN VANELONA

The original *SKATE* did a great job of creating a believable city environment, lulling players into believing that they'd stumbled across the perfect skating spot, when in actual fact the designers planned your zest for discovery with a resolute precision.

SKATE 2 continues in this fine vein, but takes it a little further. Hardcore *SKATERS* will remember the awesome leap that hurtled you down a maze of tunnels, eventually leading you to the abandoned warehouse at the foot of Old Town? *SKATE 2* has an area like that – except this time you'll be dropping yourself into a bloody abandoned dam! And the maze of tunnels you throw yourself into is far more complicated, lengthy and endlessly inventive compared to the original.


New San Vanelona is simply more intricate – both visually and in terms of design. The new lighting system is glorious, but with the frame rate taking a hit when things get crazy, we wonder if all the effects in the preview build will make it into the final version.

But we're certain that the geometric detail, the nitty gritty of *SKATE 2*'s world, most certainly will make the cut, and it's




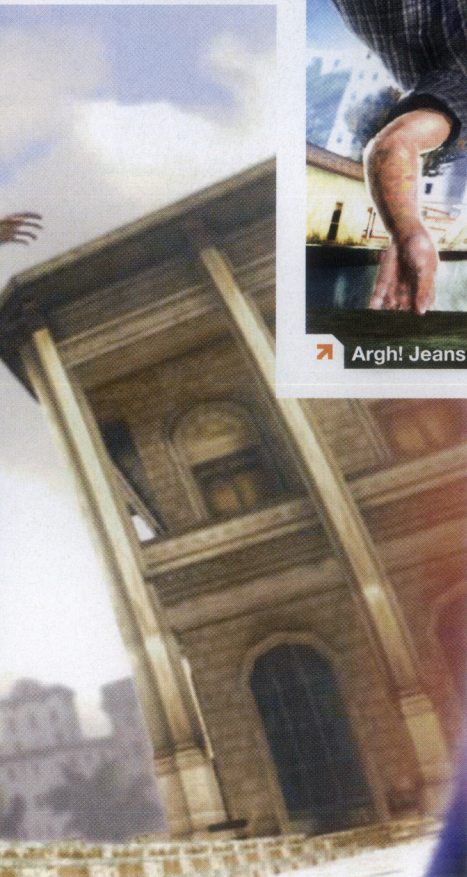
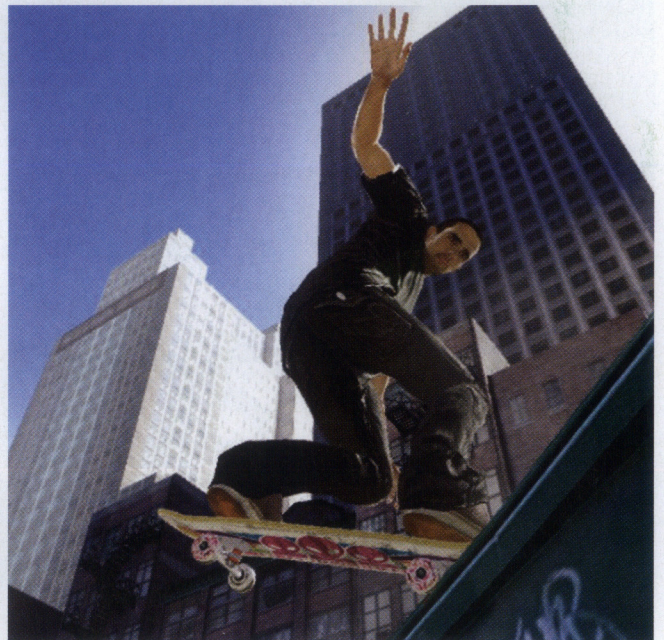
Try as he might, Daniel-san couldn't shake Mr Miyagi's crane-training...




Old McDonald could really tear it up on a board... ee-i-ee-i-oh... bitch! 



 Argh! Jeans... too... tight... for skateboarding!



in this aspect that *SKATE*'s attention to minutiae really shines through. The craftily created skating lines that were dotted around the original San Vanelona return in *SKATE 2*, except this time, they seem longer, with more variety.

And the 'grab the world' button () which allows you to move objects in the world to wherever your heart desires, really allows you to transform these skate lines, and lets you get inventive.

While we were initially skeptical regarding the ability to change the layout of objects in New San Vanelona (we stupidly thought it would end up like a *Tony Hawk*-esque indulgence that would hamper level design) it turns out that it just allows you to tweak an environment which is already choc-a-block with endless possibilities.


Now it's possible to push your imagination further, and create the ultimate skating spot of your dreams.

BRINGS A TEAR TO YOUR EYE




So in short, *SKATE 2* is a completely beautiful thing – aesthetically Black Box seems to have gotten everything spectacularly right, and the control system, which was already a genuine example of fundamental artistry, has evolved itself organically to create something that simultaneously transcends the original, yet pays homage to it.

If that sounds like meaningless, pretentious, self indulgent garbage, then forgive us – there's something about the precise way that *SKATE* is put together that

brings a little tear to our eye. Something in the way that no detail is spared, something in the brilliantly realised controls and design that just makes us wish that every other game was as well conceived and executed as this one.

We are already deeply in love with *SKATE 2*.  **Mark Serrels**

WE SAY

-  New tricks work perfectly
-  Incredible environments
-  Absolutely seamless

OPS IS...
overly excited



INCOMING

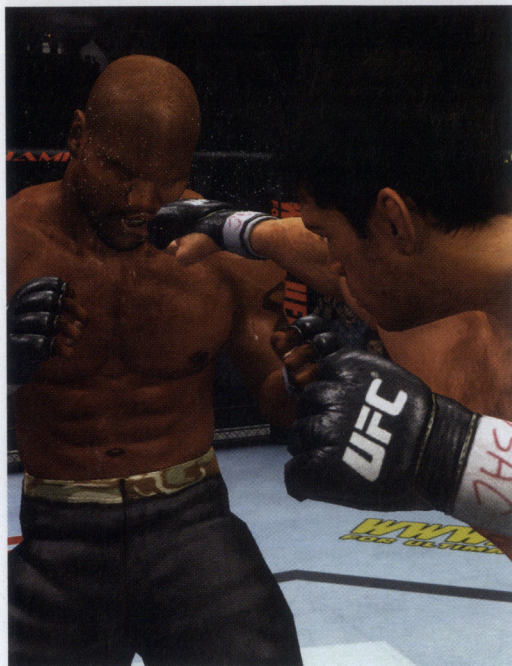
UFC 2009 Undisputed

IT'S LIKE...

WWE

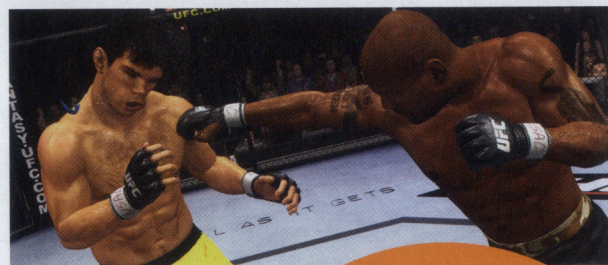
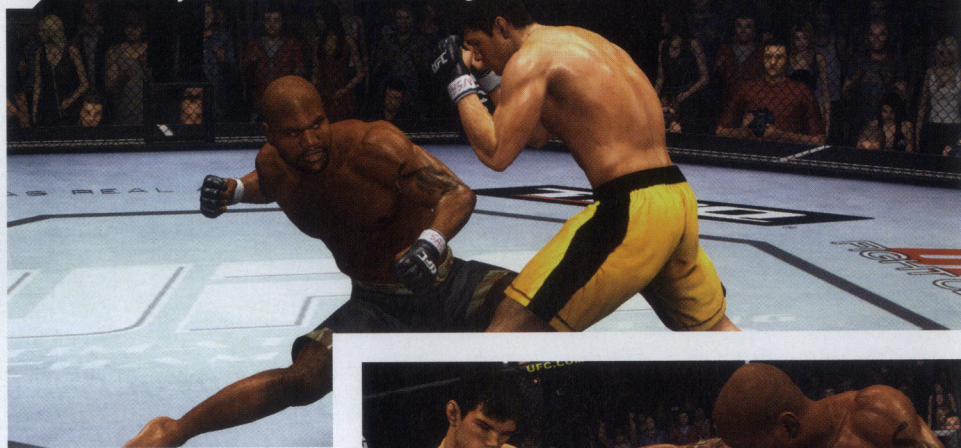


Drunken brawl



➤ "Aiee! Stop tickling me – I submit, I SUBMIT!"

➤ "It's time for your Balzacs to receive some glove love" BAM



PS3 GENRE: FIGHTING | RELEASE: TBA 2009 | DISTRIBUTOR: THQ | DEVELOPER: YUKE'S

UFC 2009 UNDISPUTED

UFC2K9U? OIC.

The UFC (or Ultimate Fighting Championship) is what you'd get if you took *Tekken's* blend of mixed-martial arts combat, and mixed it with pro-wrestling's spectacle, so it seems only fitting that, after five years, UFC returns to the gaming scene with *UFC 2009 Undisputed*.

Although we haven't had a chance to get our hands on the game yet, we've snuck a peek at some of the most recent gameplay footage, and it's obvious that Yuke's are trying to avoid many of the mistakes and pitfalls of the last UFC game.

The first and most noticeable difference is a lack of any sort of health bar. In fact, the only thing onscreen besides shirtless, sweaty guys mashing each other's faces in is the amount of time left in the round.

The second difference is the length

of each fight – no longer just a few short seconds, players can expect to have much more in-depth and long-lasting punch-ups. There are also between-round highlights of the fight, and footage from the corners of the 'Octagon' where the fighters are prepping for the next round.

Graphically, *2009 Undisputed* is looking passable (but not stunning), and for the most part the animations are smooth and flowing, but punching and kicking is looking a little... sissified. They currently lack the solidity that's necessary for players to really feel that impact, which is a little worrying – and performing attacks while grappling looks pretty clunky. The commentary is erring on the side of laughable, too.

The final game will boast over 80 fighters, with a dozen or so 'personalities'

from the show (namely referees and commentators), but it is unclear whether the fighters will differ in anything besides appearance. Ideally, each would be specialised in a certain type of combat, as tends to be the case in real life, but we can most likely expect a more all-rounder approach.

You'll be able to design and train your own fighter in the career mode too, although it remains to be seen just how customisable that process is.

For now, however, *UFC 2009 Undisputed* shows some potential. It has captured the energy of the live fights, and the combat engine shows some promise. We should be able to give you a better idea of just how it plays when we get a hands-on in the next couple of months. ➤ Nick Kolan

HI-YA!

The developers for *UFC* are rumoured to have undergone lessons in kickboxing, judo and other martial arts, assumedly to gain a better understanding of the finer-points of combat. But think about the ramifications for a second: Japanese programmers are being trained to kill. Is there anything else as terrifying and hilarious?

Only clowns.

WE SAY

- Great grappling animations
- More interesting fights
- Girly punching

OPS IS...
Man-tastic!



PS3 GENRE: ACTION | RELEASE: TBA 2009 | DISTRIBUTOR: RED ANT | DEVELOPER: GRIN

BIONIC COMMANDO

Like a one-armed man in a clapping contest

In a world of remakes and sequels comes Grin's next-gen realisation of the classic side-scroller, *Bionic Commando*.

Aside from the obviousness of updated, next-gen visuals, everything about the game has changed, except for the most essential of components: a hero with a bionic arm.

The game begins with fairly clichéd future dystopian stuff, but it does set the right tone for the one-armed protagonist's dry sense of humour. You start the action without the aid of your bionic arm, but thankfully it's not too long before you're reunited with the mechanical limb. After ramming the arm back into its socket, the hero does what all manly-men do:

he passes out. Cue the very necessary training sequence.

This flashback sequence allows for you to start getting a hang of the swinging mechanic you'll be using for the rest of the game. Using the extendable arm is initially straightforward, but when it comes to swinging from object to object, all at various heights and angles that require you to time your leaps perfectly in order to ensure forward momentum, it gets a whole lot trickier.

Post-training you're thrown into the thick of it and expected to traverse the environment like a sci-fi Tarzan, so it's important to get a hang of the swinging sooner, rather than later. You'll

also be manoeuvring through huge 3D environments with only a 2D map as a guide, so navigation can be a pain.

Once mastered though, traversing levels is a helluva lot of fun. Almost any object in the gaming world can be grappled onto or swung from. The downside is that every object that can be grappled has an annoying blue reticle attached to it as well. It would have been easier to show from the outset what can and cannot be interacted with and let the player decide what they want to latch onto manually with their crosshair.

Melee combat is fun, albeit a bit clunky due to targeting difficulties that can leave you punching thin air. You'll learn new

IT'S LIKE...

Commando



Swinging

bionic arm skills as you get further into the game, including the ability to 'rip' certain objects onto unsuspecting foes. Hide-to-heal logic is also part of *Bionic Commando*, so you won't be health pack hunting, which encourages you to try more risky styles of combat.

In spite of the minor annoyances, and due to the variety of environments to swing into combat from, *Bionic Commando* could well set itself apart from the usual brand of traditional action title. We like it... a lot.

▲ Nathan Lawrence

“It's the Scoleri Brothers! I gave them the chair years ago!”



“Need a hand... er, I mean an arm. Man I really suck at catchphrases.”



SWINGIN' AIN'T EASY

Swinging from objects isn't as simple as holding **LT**; you'll also be using **X** and **Y** to adjust the length of cable you're working with. Combine this with the need to navigate on the fly, attack enemies while moving at high speed and ensuring you don't end up swinging down the wrong radioactive alley, and you're gonna want to hone your multitasking. Once you get it down, you'll be wondering how you ever played games without an extendable, bionic arm.

WE SAY

- ↑ Unique game mechanic
- ↑ Spectacular combat
- ↓ Difficult controls

OPS IS...
Swingin' high



INCOMING

Legends of WrestleMania

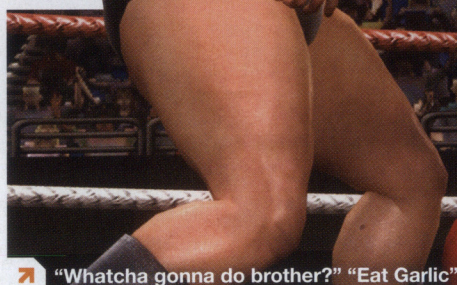


IT'S LIKE...

SD vs. RAW



History Channel



"Whatcha gonna do brother?" "Eat Garlic"

FRUITY

Funny thing, growing up. When you're a kid watching *He-Man*, you focus on the kick-arse action and epic dialogue. Only with hindsight can you see how incredibly, er, fruity it all was. So too with wrestling. Manly men in form-fitting speedos, with pastel streamers trailing from their costumes? Petty rivalries climaxing in catty, underhanded melee? WWE is for 'open-minded' gamers only.

PS3 GENRE: FIGHTING | RELEASE: TBA 2009 | DISTRIBUTOR: THQ | DEVELOPER: YUKE'S

LEGENDS OF WRESTLEMANIA

THQ is ready to drop the nostalgia bomb

Living in the past will become just that little bit easier in 2009, when THQ releases *Legends of WrestleMania*. Casting a teary, nostalgic eye over the first 15 years of the biggest event in 'Sports Entertainment,' this game will explore the golden era of TV wrestling.

'Twas the golden age of swarthy, sweaty men grappling in their underpants - before the World Wildlife Fund sued the World Wrestling Federation and forced them to change their name. Like anyone would ever get them confused.

While WWE bouts are as choreographed as ballet, the opportunity here is to use a newly overhauled fighting system to bend fate to your will. Sure, if you want you can pit Andre the Giant against Hulk Hogan, and aim for a perfect score by performing

an exact recreation of their Earth-shattering match from *WrestleMania III*.

Or you can try to rewrite history. There are some people out there who re-enact the American Civil War in their spare time - *Legends of WrestleMania* will let you re-enact *WrestleMania XV*, when Stone Cold Steve Austin challenged the Rock, and the Scorpion King was declared the People's Champ as a result.

THQ is keeping mum on most of the roster, but a whopping 40 wrestlers and managers will be included. Managers confirmed for *LoW* include Jimmy Hart and Bobby 'The Brain' Heenan - these flamboyant fellows will have their own crucial roles to play in determining match outcomes.

Above all, realism is paramount. These are the most accurate character models

we've ever seen in a wrestling game - as an added bonus you'll be able to import your custom wrestlers from *Smackdown vs. RAW 2009* and try them out in the new engine.

Period intros with all their cheesy fireworks and dated TV graphic effects will be re-created, and substantial video footage from the vaults has been exhumed to set the scene. When you see Hulk Hogan confronting Andre, balking at the man-mountain's challenge, the drama is palpable.

Veteran commentators have been brought onboard to reprise their roles; the ones left alive, at any rate. Online matches will be supported, too.

Basically, THQ's ambition here is to create an interactive version of the WWE Hall of Fame, in which the epic matches of the late '80s and early '90s can be relived.

If you relish the prospect of controlling Hulk Hogan as he slowly lifts a very large, very fat Frenchman before slamming him into oblivion, then this is for you. For younger fans, this might well be an affordable way of buying the complete back-catalogue of WWE DVDs. **James Cotte**

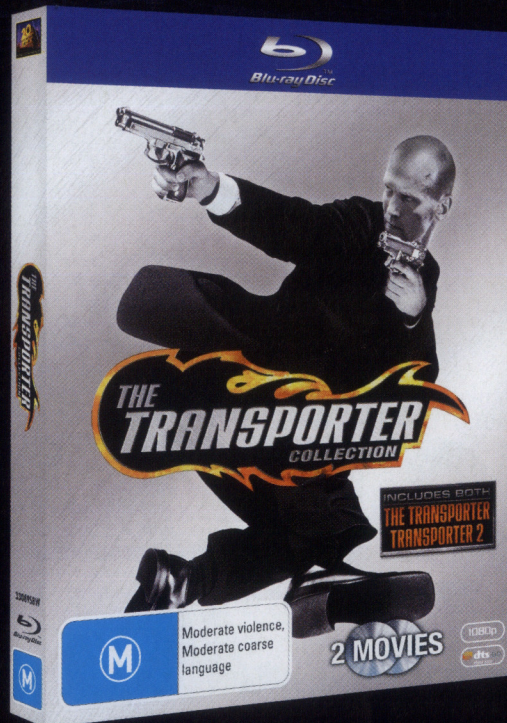
WE SAY

- ↑ Nostalgia aplenty
- ↑ Amazing realism
- ↓ Slightly fruity

OPS IS...
Working up a sweat



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IT'S LIKE...

Far Cry 2



Mercenaries 2



➤ If you're John Travolta: "it's electrifying". If you're Connery: "shocking". We like Connery better!

PS3 GENRE: ACTION | RELEASE: JUNE 2009 | DISTRIBUTOR: THQ | DEVELOPER: VOLITION

RED FACTION: GUERRILLA

Rearrange the following: Mars, get, arse, to, your

Delays always fill us with suspicion – with dread. Sometimes, a game is held back because the developer wants to make it juuuuuust right (*GTA IV*). Sometimes, it's because they're desperately trying to make the unworkable work (*Alone in the Dark*).

There's no need to panic in this case, however. We were actually surprised to hear that the new *Red Faction* is being pushed back to June. Because, frankly, it looks done. It's looks finished. It looks... bloody amazing, really – like no other game on the market. Volition claims that their new 'Geo-mod' technology is at least two years ahead of the competition, and we're inclined to believe them.

While there is a deliberate objective (liberate Mars), the world is open,

and the objectives open-ended. The revolution is unfolding all around you. The oppressed miners are rebelling against the EDF, sparking skirmishes all across the vast game map. It's through this progressive chaos that you roam, striking at targets of opportunity, and helping out any bands of rebels that have gotten themselves into a jam.

A simple drive down the road can lead to all kinds of vandalism. For instance, you might hoon past some innocent-looking solar panels on the side of the road.

But wait – they're represented by blue dots on the map. That means they're EDF property! Every blue dot you smash will weaken their forces in the district, ultimately making it that little bit

easier to drive them out later on.

As good a reason as any to back up and back over those pesky glass rectangles, smashing them beyond recognition.

If you fancy more catharsis, you can hop out and break them by hand with your ever-ready sledgehammer; one of the most enlightened choices for a zero-ammo weapon we've ever seen.

Why does smashing feel so good? Because all those prissy EDF structures look so perfect to start with.

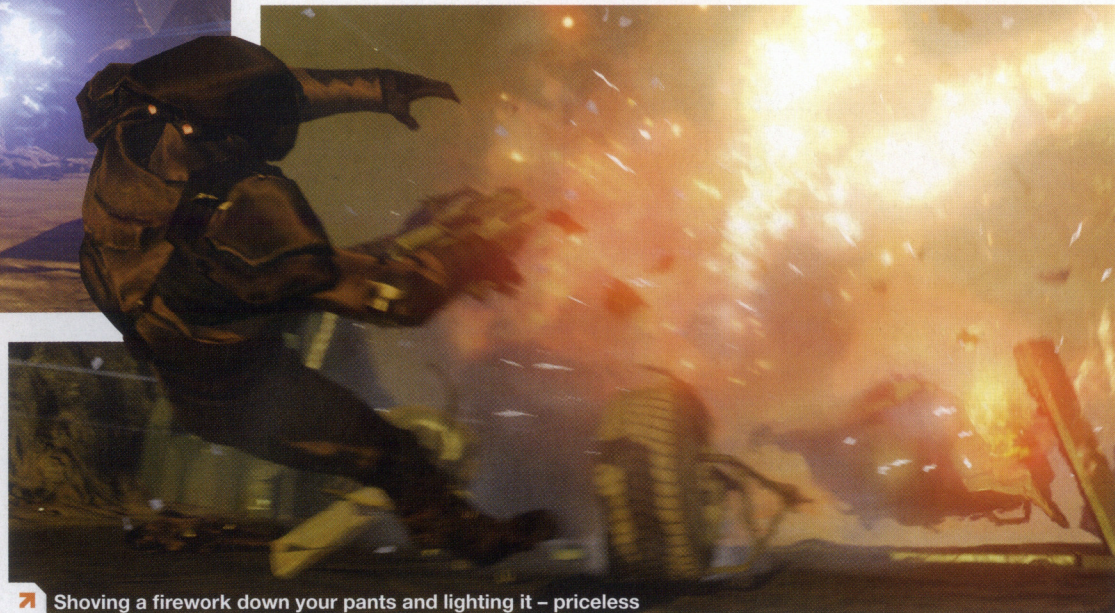
The graphics – they're rock solid. There are two sides to that statement, the first being a horrible, literal pun. For the rocky terrain of the new *Red Faction* is indestructible, and no amount of battering from your impressive arsenal

will scratch it. This was a deliberate decision on the part of Volition when they were first designing the Red Engine, and you can see why they did it.

For one thing, the lay of the land is a huge factor in planning your attacks, and determining how they unfold. Friend and foe alike are channeled by deep grooves carved into the Martian bedrock – having the ability to tunnel through every ridge would break the game. This doesn't really affect you, though, since a couple of hours in you get a jet pack.

Frankly, we're glad Volition chose their battles wisely. By ignoring the dirt, they've been able to focus on the buildings. Glorious, glistening structures, rendered with a solidity and a presence that we simply haven't seen yet this





➤ Shoving a firework down your pants and lighting it – priceless

➤ See kids, even badass soldier dudes wear knee pads



HAMMER ON!

With a sledgehammer that resembles a very large axe, and the reflective tape on his overcoat, Alec looks a bit like a fireman. Actually, he looks a lot like a fireman. Since chicks dig firemen, it would seem logical that Volition is trying to appeal to the vast untapped market of girl gamers. Makes sense to us. Yet we asked Volition, and apparently they're not. It's just a coincidence. Oh well.



generation. Every object in the game 'knows' what substance it's made out of, and behaves accordingly. As a result, the level designers had to take a refresher course in architecture to ensure their creations could actually stand up under their own weight.

The way all those futuristic metals and plastics glisten through the dusty air, it's magic. But not half as magic as the chaos unleashed when you tear them all down.

Wander out onto a pedestrian bridge in one of the more posh districts, and there's nothing to stop you firing at the ground with your disintegrator, eventually forcing the span to collapse. Too bad for anyone driving on the highway below, but then you can't make a revolutionary

omelette without cracking a few heads.

Naturally, this creative destruction attracts the attention of the authorities. Spark enough havoc, and you'll be facing off against main battle tanks – a scary thought if you're on foot.

Ah, but those EDF goons didn't figure on your welding gun, a devious weapon improvised from a simple miner's tool. Get close to a tank, and its beam shoots out like lightning, or the proton rays of the Ghostbusters. Zap a tank for a couple of seconds, and you'll scorch the fascists inside.

Then you can simply hop up and climb in – it's YOUR tank now!

The music is bang on, too. Like *Mass Effect* on the 360 (boo! hiss!), it uses '80s-style synth and electric guitar to

awesome effect, conjuring up a pre-*Total Recall* era of sci-fi excess: terraforming, lasers, and black hole hand grenades.

Yes – portable black holes! Throw a 'Singularity Bomb', and step the hell back for a wicked view of villains being sucked into another dimension. A WWII-era pineapple would kill them just as dead, but it wouldn't look one tenth as cool.

Big guns, big vehicles, and a very, very big world to smash. Er, we mean, liberate. *Red Faction: Guerrilla* will offer up a whole new icy world to conquer, just as our own sunburnt lands plunge into the depths of winter.

It's a cliché to say it, but with the new *Red Faction*, there won't be much reason to go outside. **James Cotte**

WE SAY

- ⬆ Slick graphics
- ⬆ Slick weapons
- ⬇ The wait continues

OPS IS...
In open revolt!



INCOMING

50 Cent: Blood on the Sand

BULLET PROOF

Fiddy is almost impossible to kill. Mr Cent can soak up around 100 slugs at close range with little ill effect. The diminished fear of death ensures a smoother game, and successfully portrays the multimillionaire's self-styled aura of indestructibility.

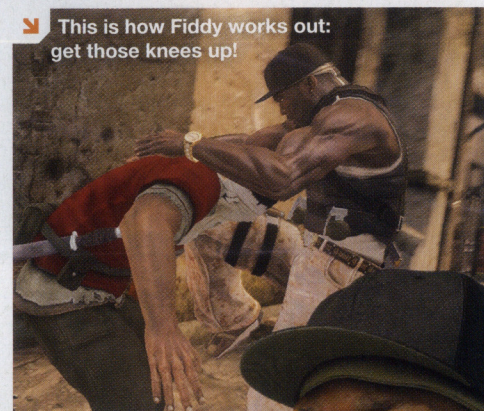
Fiddy's arms: they look like the worms from *Tremors*

This is how Fiddy works out: get those knees up!

IT'S LIKE...

The Club

CB4



PS3 GENRE: SHOOTER | RELEASE: TBA 2009 | DISTRIBUTOR: THQ | DEVELOPER: SWORDFISH STUDIOS

50 CENT: BLOOD ON THE SAND

Fiddy is off to shoot some terrorists

The big surprise: this game is actually pretty good. Yeah, we know. Crazy. A vanity project in which a popular rap artist and his close personal friends tool around a generic Middle Eastern city, murdering vast numbers of a-rabs with assault rifles and C4. Pure gangster fantasy. But it works.

Blood on the Sand walks a middle road between the fire-from-cover systems of *Gears of War* et al, and the time-sensitive antics of *The Club*. The controls are solid, the Unreal Engine graphics look swish, the bullet time is used judiciously, and enough genuine 50 Cent character is present to get fans standing to attention.

Blood on the Sand is a solid shooter – it gets the job done. Naturally, everything is translated into gangster-speak. Not just the dialogue, with the esteemed Mr Cent swearing like a sailor, but the visual language. Smash open a crate, and assorted gold trinkets ('bling') will burst out, and fly towards the cap-popping rapper.

Slain villains dispense fat wads of Benjamins – these too are magnetically

drawn towards his defined triceps.

The art design is also above par. This particular rendering of the poo-brown Middle East offers a surprising variety of colours, including sharp red outlines to show you where your victims are, and reflective, persistent pools of blood that ooze from those you've slain.

Co-op runs right through the game. Play solo, and friendly AI will take over one of Cent's loyal G-Unit troopers to provide a consistent buddy experience.

A handy balance has been struck between hardcore and casual sensibilities. Assuming you use cover when available, and dispatch enemies promptly, it's pretty hard to die. But at the same time, there are timed challenges for the competent and keen – kill all of these particular dudes before the clock runs out. That sort of thing. If you fail it's no big deal, but the option is always there if you crave it.

Other standard features are a steadily recharging bullet time bar, and close quarter combat resolved by quick time actions. Only this game is anything but standard. Few third-person shooters

have a swearing button, and this is the first we've ever played that lets you unlock new dirty words and phrases as you go.

As for the story, it's a ridiculously contrived excuse to string together terrorist-killing urban firefights with the occasional vehicle level.

In short, all our expectations were defied and exceeded. *Blood on the Sand* looks like a hit in the making.

James Cottee

WE SAY

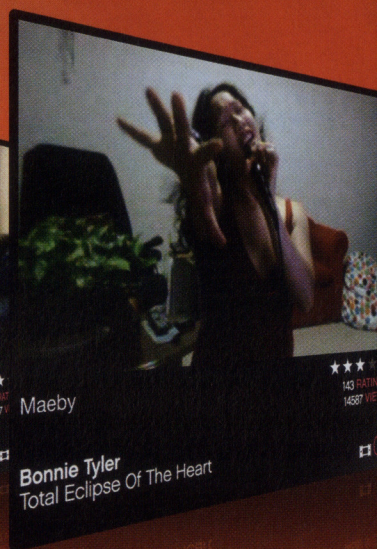
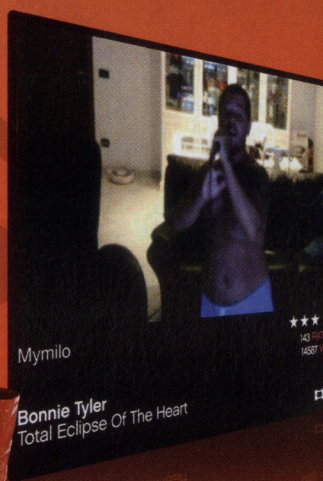
Swearing is fun

So is violence

Little replayability

OPS IS...
Bloody impressed





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INDEPTH

F.E.A.R.2: Project Origins





WORDS- ANTHONY O'CONNOR

WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR BUT F.E.A.R. ITSELF...

And that creepy little girl demon. And spiders. And clowns. Actually you know what? Be afraid! There's heaps of scary stuff out there!

Usually interviews conducted with game producers are about as much fun as nail-gunning a dead rat to your knee (not that we've ever done that [cough]) – not because the producers are bad people per se, it's just... they usually sound like press releases. "Yeah, we're really proud of the urinating mechanic," they'll bray, "wee has been missing from games for years! We predict all games will have the ability to wee by 2010."

Okay, not that bad, but you get the idea. Eric Studer – associate producer – had much to say on *F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin*, but he sounded genuinely excited about it. A feeling that proved infectious – by the

end of the interview we wanted to play it, dammit, and play it right now!

FEAR FACTORY

F.E.A.R. for the PS3 was not great. Somehow the graphics ported from the 360 looked, what's the technical term, "bad"? Yes, that's the one. Dark, grainy and buggy, *F.E.A.R.* was not a game that impressed many on the PS3. This was the first point raised in the interview and it seemed Eric was ready for it.

"Oh no, can I stop you there?" he asked good naturedly. "I've got to tell you something. With this game there are no ports." No ports? By God this man is clearly suffering from a dose of the dreaded brain worms! We informed him of same and suggested he seek medical attention post-bloody-haste.

"No," he chuckled at that assessment of his capacity for wormy brain thought, "It's going like this: every system will have their own team. So each system will get the best possible

game. The PS3 one is being designed by a PS3 team. So whatever you get it on, it's going to be the best quality. We were really disappointed with some of the ports of the original, so that was really the first thing we wanted to fix. Also there will be no skewed release dates. Everyone will be able to buy this on the same day."

Fair enough, quite impressive too. But let's face it: creepy little girls, like Alma from *F.E.A.R.*, are on the outs. The Americans have remade every single Japanese horror flick with creepy, long-haired girls so how are they going to bring the *F.E.A.R.* this time?

"Well, obviously Alma's back," Eric admitted, "But to some degree the themes of J-horror have reached saturation point. Our efforts were how do we take Alma to the next level? Eastern European horror seems to be taking over at the moment. With *F.E.A.R.*, Alma was a standoffish antagonist. In *F.E.A.R. 2: Project Origin* we really explore the guts. She gets in

your face a lot."

Alright, that's all good and well, but is this just going to be another game that ends on a cliff-hanger and doesn't answer any questions? Because horror games like *Dead Space* have, quite frankly, raised the bar on survival horror with action.

"We want to make the game appealing to veterans and people who are playing a *F.E.A.R.* game for the first time. With discussions and little clues we'll bring newbies up to date, plus veteran players will get a kick out of what we bring."

ALMA MATER

F.E.A.R. was quite unique in that it was horrific but it also gave you, the player, powers like the slow-mo bullet time effect. It's dated now, certainly, but we wanted to know if you're a player with powers or just some punk with a gun.

"Oh, the effects are returning!" Eric laughed, "And there is an actual justification that makes sense. We've

also enhanced all of the effects. You know how it used to grey out? Well now the enemy characters have rim lighting so they're easier to shoot. I mean, why bother having powers if they make things harder?"

We had to ask, does the team feel any heat from the new kid in town, *Dead Space*, or the older, venerable statesman *Resident Evil 5*?

"I haven't played *Resident Evil 5*, but we're not worried. Those games are bringing varying degrees of horror to the table. And that's fine, but *F.E.A.R.* is unique in a number of ways. Firstly, the action is way more refined and visceral than a straight horror game. Plus we can skew from action packed moments, to creepy moments, to horrific moments – we have kind of a large palette to draw from here. The creepiness is kind of a counterpoint to the action. We don't want anyone playing this game to get complacent. You know how that happens in shooters? You know how to kill a dude, so you just do it that way again and again? *F.E.A.R.*: *PO* will

always keeping you guessing and on edge. I think that will definitely make us stand out from the pack in that way."

Sure, it sounds good, but let's have some examples of this. It's all good and well to say 'you'll always be on the edge of your seat!' but without backing it up – it's just a wee chunk of hyperbole. So, please to explain how we'll always be guessing.

"Well, we're trying to make things different every time – one of the highlights is the AI. The AI is adaptive."

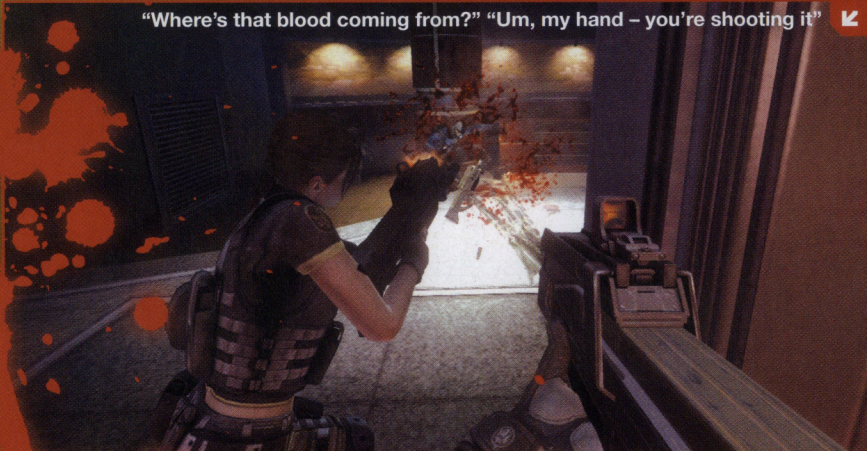
And that means...?

"The AI will take advantage of blind spots. We've had testers in who describe this as a sandbox game. I have watched people do levels dozens of times and the experience has never been repeated twice because everyone plays differently."

Okay, that does sound pretty cool. In fact it sounds bloody awesome. But why should we take this bloke's word for it? After all, how many times have we been told to expect the enemies to have the IQ of Stephen Hawking and



"Where's that blood coming from?" "Um, my hand – you're shooting it" ↗



7 "Man that curry worked fast" "Shut up Fanta pants"

W.E.B. DUBOIS

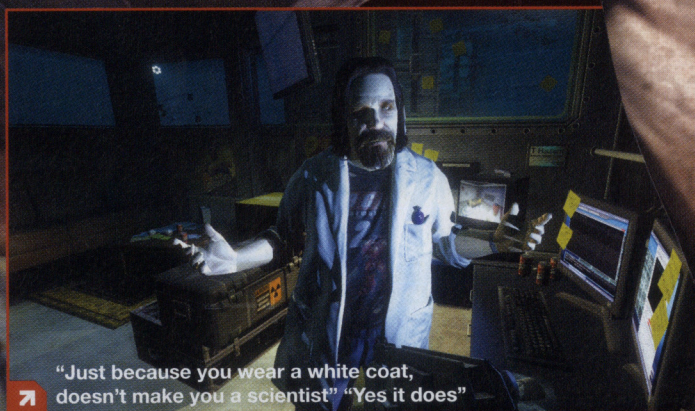
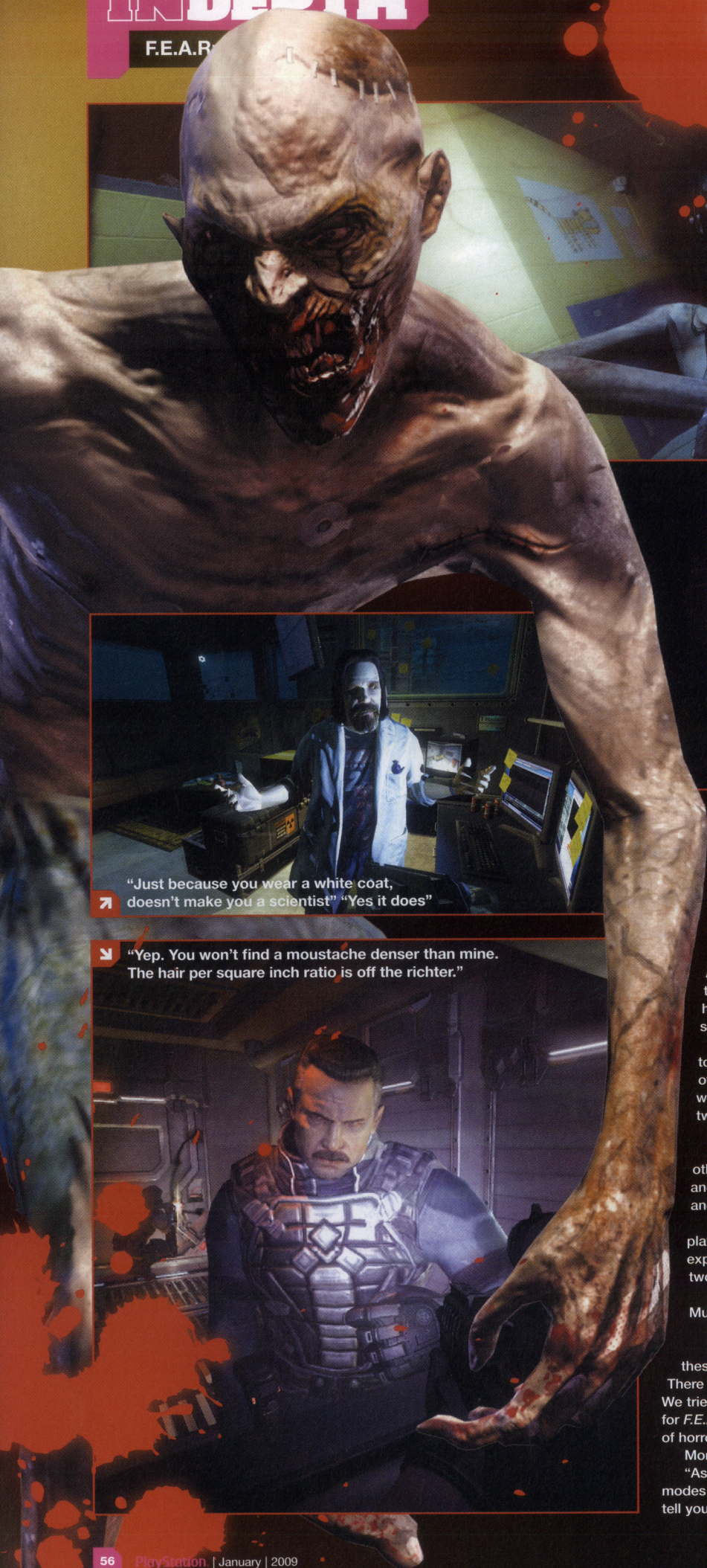


FOR THE GLORY OF HELGHAN

The wait is almost over. Coming February 2009.



"WE HAVE A HORROR-THEMED ACTION SHOOTER WITH COOL POWERS, COOL WEAPONS AND AN ACTUAL STORY"



7 "Just because you wear a white coat, doesn't make you a scientist" "Yes it does"

7 "Yep. You won't find a moustache denser than mine. The hair per square inch ratio is off the richter."



when we play the game we see soldiers not reacting to grenades thrown directly at their heads or enemies walking into walls?

"Hey, I'm putting it on the line here," Eric says, "I'm in print talking about this adaptive AI. I am genuinely excited about the effect this game's going to have on the community - it's seriously that unique."

Righto. We're excited. It has to be said. Adaptive AI, mixture of action/horror and just plain weirdness, never the same game twice - all good things.

But does it have co-op?

A deafening silence on the other end. Chatter between Eric and a lady about what they can and cannot say.

"There's no co-op in the single player mode. Because it's a unique experience. It's a lot harder to scare two people working together."

True, but what were they hiding. Multiplayer?

Another silence.

Then, Eric returns with: "Okay, these are the things I can tell you. There is no co-op in the main game. We tried it out but it just doesn't work for F.E.A.R.. We sacrificed it in the name of horror."

More muttering.

"As for multiplayer it has all the modes you expect and... well... I can tell you about EPA mode where you

just lay waste to all your environments. That's one we're particularly proud of."

Was there perhaps another wee bit of info Eric could tell us?

"Okay, I can't specifically tell you about some of the multiplayer modes, but they're very original, unique and some go back to your co-op question."

Ah-hah! Forced some answers out of him and didn't even need to use nipple clamps. So we have a horror-themed action shooter with cool powers, cool weapons and an actual story that doesn't end on a cheap 'shock' moment (*Resistance 2*, we're looking at you). A whole bunch of traditional multiplayer modes, some less traditional, and of course the adaptive AI which, if it delivers, could really revolutionise the way the FPS is played.

Plus the open admission that yes, J-horror has probably been bastardised enough and new thrills will be delivered well, we're pretty stoked.

"I'm excited about this game. I know you probably hear that a lot [we do] but I'm just... I really believe this is one of those games people will be talking about for a long time. We were so unimpressed with the ported versions that we had to take it back and make a game that will blow everyone, on every system, away. And scare the crap out of them!"

A noble goal and a cool sounding title. But can it possibly live up to the hype? Keep reading and you'll know as soon as we do. **JB**

WORDS: MARK SERRELS

HARD DRIVIN'

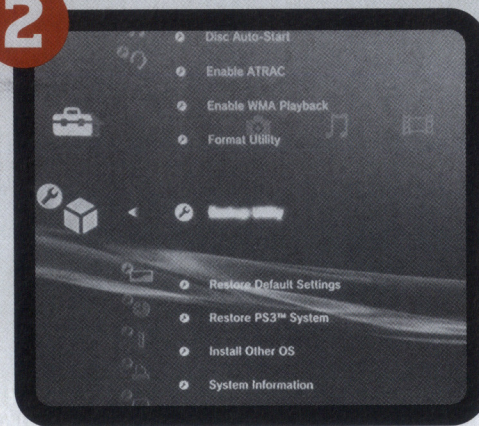
We've all been there. We've all felt that pain. You've just picked up a brand new game, you've pulled off the wrapper in a feverish frenzy, fingers-a-tremblin'. Then you slide the disc in to find the game requires a mandatory install. No biggie you think, I can delay gratification for another 15 minutes. But it's then you realise you have no space left on said HDD. What should you do in this situation? Delete stuff? Pfft! That's for big girly men. It's time to get your hands dirty and install a brand new hard drive with more capacity. And here's how you pull it off.

1



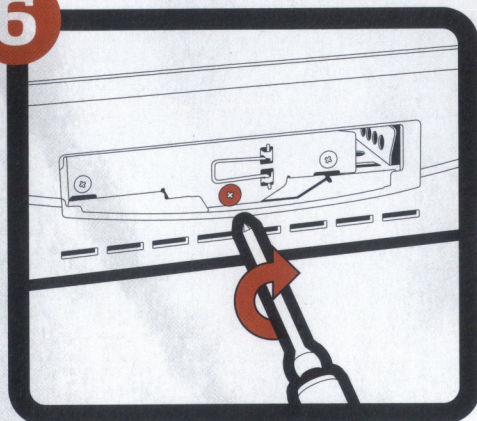
STEP 1: If you want a backup of your saves, then you'll need one of these. The size required will depend on how much you're going to back up. Plug it in.

2



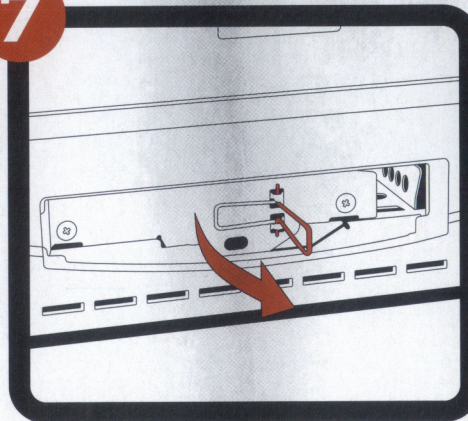
STEP 2: Now head to the settings section of the cross media bar. There should be a tab called 'Backup utility' – click into this section.

6



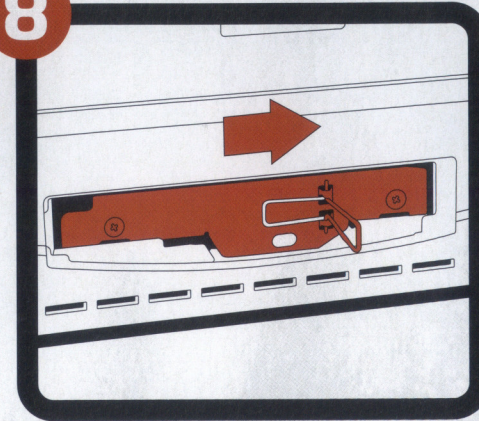
STEP 6: Now this may seem like the easiest part, but unscrewing this requires care. It's pretty easy to thread the screw here, take your time, and use a bit of force.

7

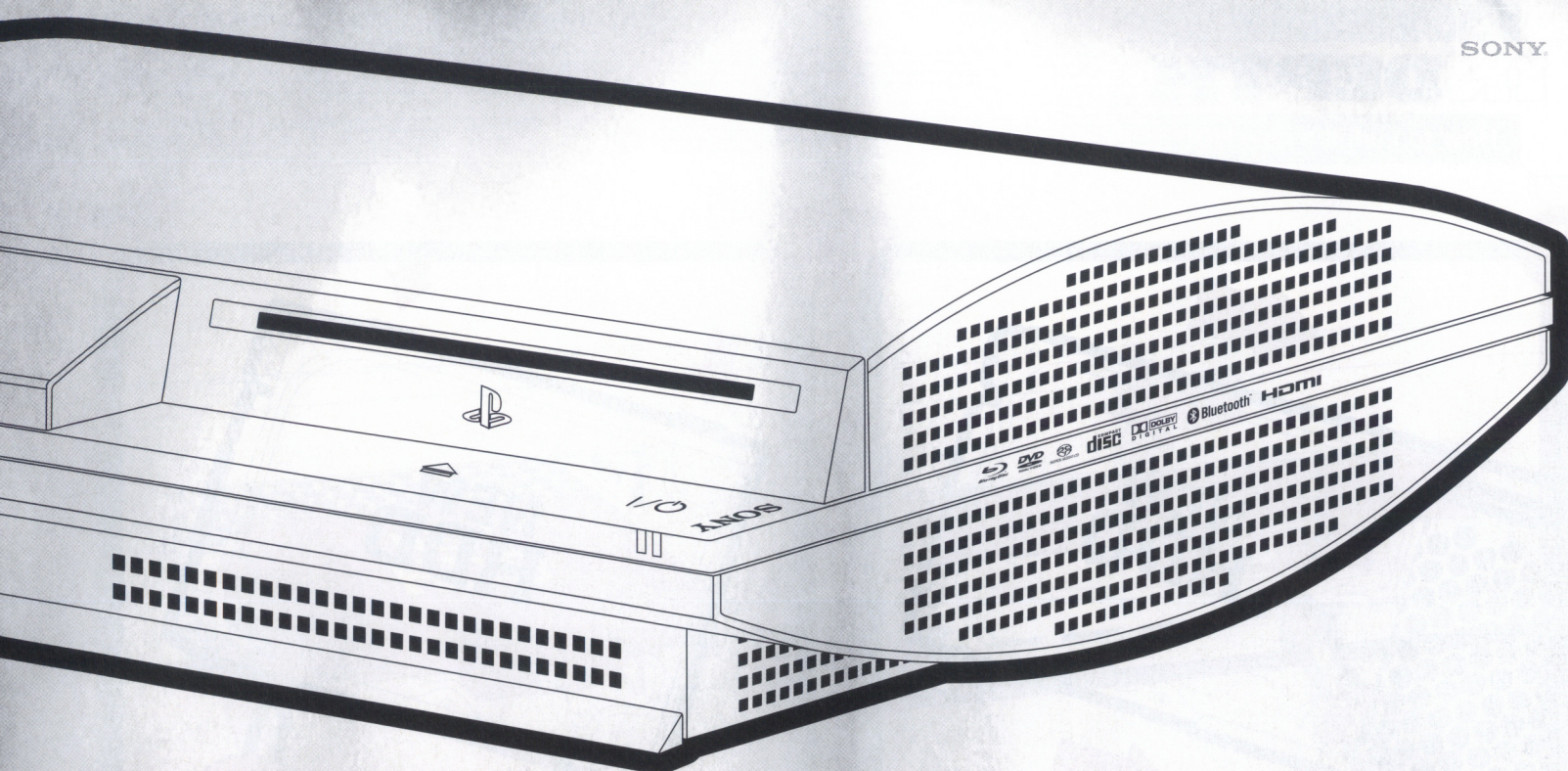


STEP 7: Once the screw is removed, it's time to take out the hard drive itself. See that little paper clip lookin' thing? Flip it up.

8

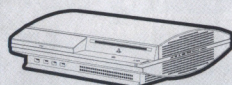


STEP 8: Now remove your old crusty HDD. Don't rip it out carelessly, pull it gently as shown above. There's a possibility you could use this drive later.



THINGS YOU NEED:

ESTIMATED TIME OF COMPLETION: 2 HOURS



1X PS3
CONSOLE



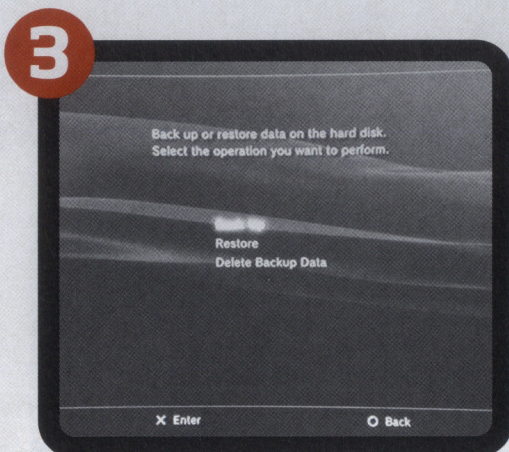
1X USB
BACKUP HDD



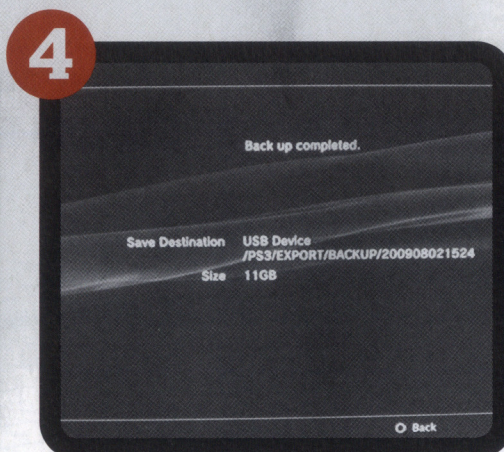
1X SCREWDRIVER
TOOL



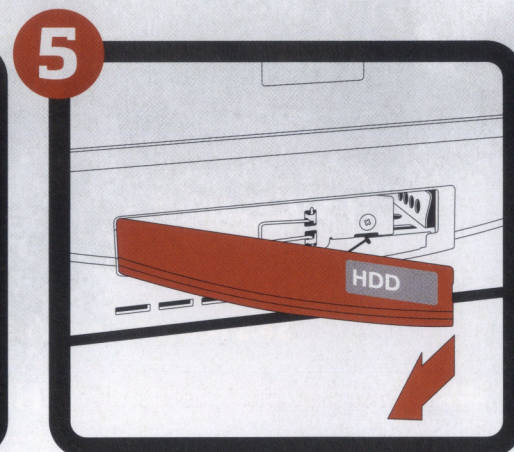
1X NEW 2.5" SATA
HDD 250GB+



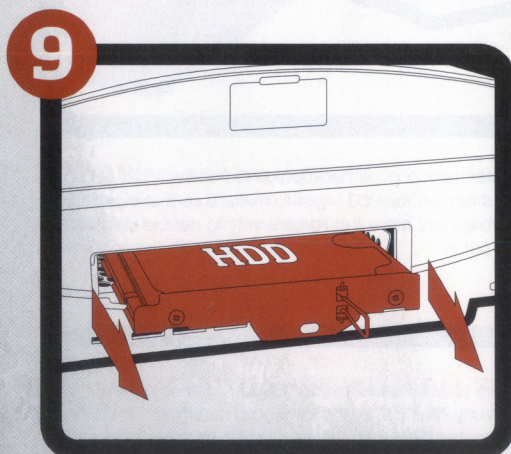
STEP 3: At this stage choose the 'Back Up' option, but you'll be heading back here at the end of the process to transfer the saves onto your new HDD.



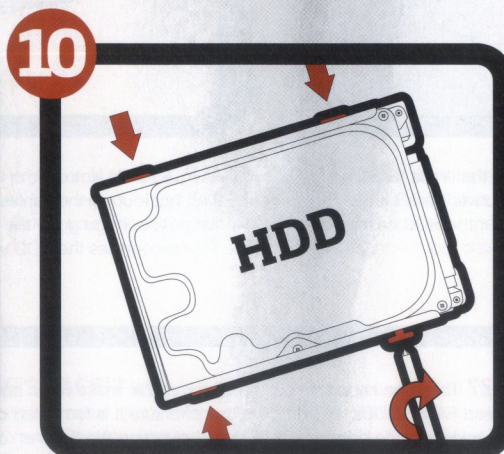
STEP 4: Depending on how much you have on your PS3, this could take a while. When this message appears, you're good to go. Now turn off and unplug your PS3.



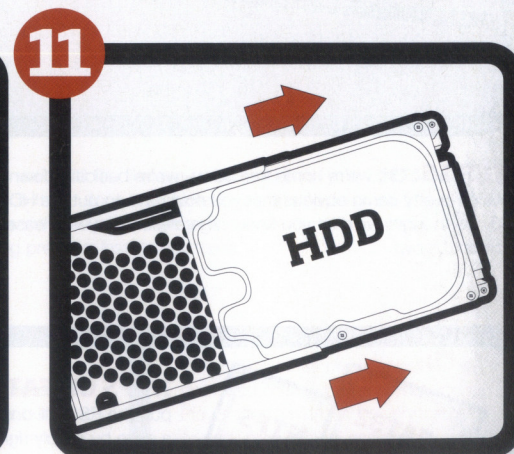
STEP 5: On the side of your PS3 there's a little slot conveniently titled HDD. Pull the cover off gently, this is where things start to get a bit more technical.



STEP 9: Slowly slide the drive out of the PS3. Now you're essentially half way there. The old PS3 hard drive has been taken out, now to put the big daddy HDD in.



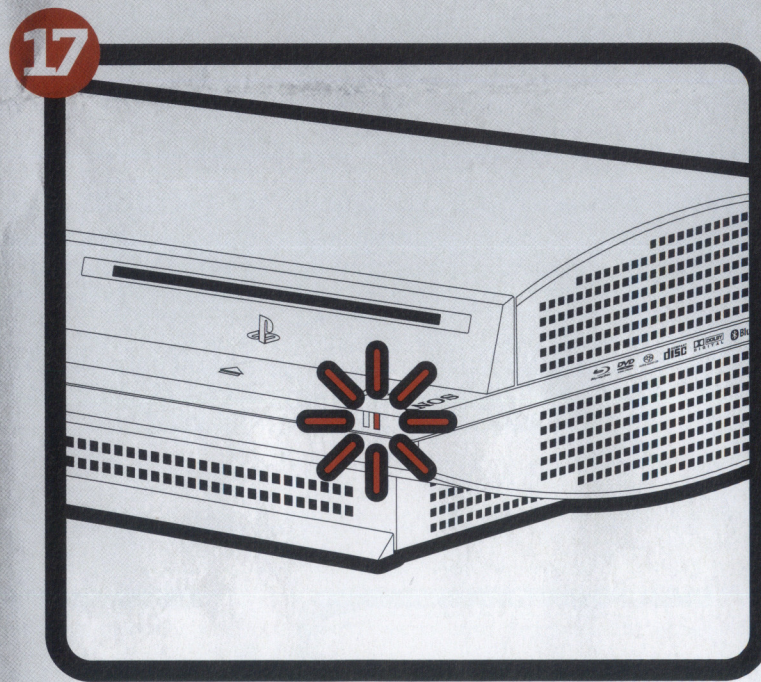
STEP 10: Now you have to take the HDD out of its casing – it's easy in practice. Remove the screws holding it in place. These ones aren't too difficult to remove.



STEP 11: Now slide the HDD out of the tray casing. Take care of this drive – it's a generic drive, so it could be used in your PC, or as a spare USB drive.



STEP 13: Now all that's really required is to reverse the removal process. Take the new HDD and put it back in the PS3 casing – back where your old drive was. Gently place it back in, then line up the screw holes correctly. Once that's done, carefully put the screws back in, locking the HDD in place.



STEP 17: It's almost time to start restoring the backup you did earlier – but before we do that, hook up all the cables and turn on the PS3 – just to make sure that everything is working. Also, if you go to the settings tab, there should be a way to double check that the PS3 recognises the HDD you put in.



NTFS OR FAT32? This is an important distinction for you to make when backing up your saves to your USB hard drive. Simply put, the PS3 will only read FAT32 HDDs, so you have to make sure it is formatted correctly. Most PCs will allow you to reformat a drive by simply right clicking on the drive on your PC and selecting the 'Format' option, but if it doesn't, then it gets a bit more complicated. Select 'run' from the Windows menu, then write cmd. This takes you to 'ye olde school' DOS screen. If you type in **format /FS:FAT32 X:**, making sure to replace the letter 'X' with the letter of your drive, your HDD will format to FAT32.

to with the highest concern for safety. However, any such potential for causing fire, electrical shock or personal injury. Follow these guidelines:

• Do not touch the system or any of its components when it is powered on.

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Photosensitivity/Epilepsy/Seizures

A very small percentage of individuals may experience epileptic seizures or blackouts when exposed to certain light patterns or flashing lights. Exposure to certain patterns or backgrounds on a television screen or other display may trigger epileptic seizures or blackouts in these individuals. These conditions may trigger previously undetected epileptic symptoms or seizures in persons who have no history of epileptic seizures or epilepsy. If you, or someone in your family, has an epileptic condition or has had seizures or any kind, consult your physician before using PlayStation 3.

IMMEDIATELY DISCONTINUE use and consult your physician before resuming gameplay if you or your child experience any of the following health problems or symptoms:

- dizziness
- blurred vision
- eye or muscle twitches
- loss of consciousness

Network - wired connection

Use only an Ethernet cable compatible with 10BASE-TX or 100BASE-T networks. Do not use a cord for a standard residential telephone line or cables of types other than those mentioned here. Using the wrong type of cord or cable can cause more electrical current than necessary to flow through the LAN connector, which may lead to heat build-up, fire or malfunction.

Moisture condensation

If the system or disc is brought directly from a cold location to a warm one, moisture may condense on the lens inside the system or on the disc. Should this occur, the system may not operate properly. In this case, remove the disc and turn off and unplug the system. Do not put the disc back in until the moisture evaporates (this may take several hours).

Hard disk

This system is equipped with a hard disk (a recording device for storing software, data, etc.). Follow the instructions below to help prevent software or data loss or corruption or damage to the hard disk.

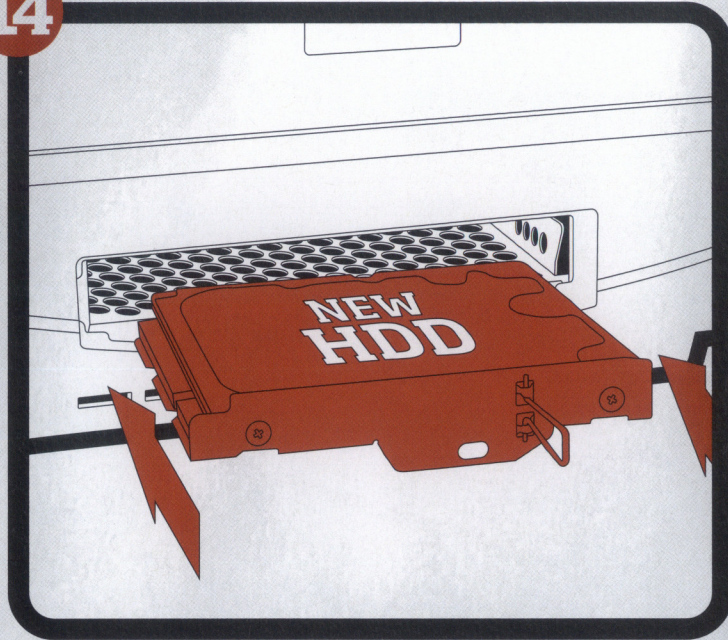
- Do not place the system on an unstable surface or a surface that is subject to vibration.
- Do not move the system while it is turned on.
- Do not subject the system to physical shock.
- Do not turn off the system while data is being saved on or loaded from the hard disk.
- Do not place the system close to magnetic fields produced by magnets or loudspeakers.

If for any reason software or data loss or corruption occurs, it may not be possible to restore or repair the software or data. Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. and its subsidiaries and affiliates will not be held liable for damage or injury related to software or data loss or corruption.

SONY

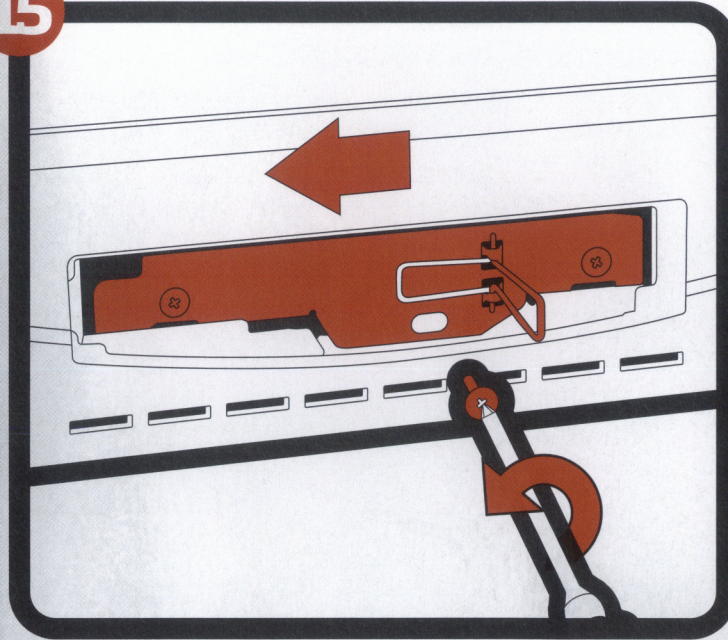


14



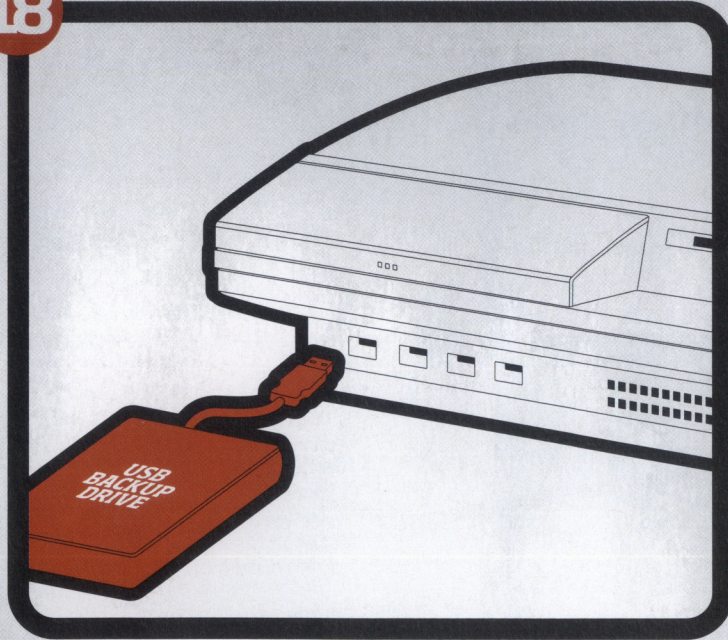
STEP 14: This part is simple enough, even your blind, deaf, grandmother could pull this off. Double check that everything's locked in place on the HDD tray, and then put it back into the PS3 from whence it came. To be perfectly honest you can't mess this thing up. Just put it back in!

15



STEP 15: Now, just as you used the little paper clip to remove the PS3 HDD in the first place, you must use that wee fernickity thing to push it back in. Once you've done that (you'll feel it getting pushed into the port) get the blue screw and carefully replace it, bearing in mind that it easily threads.

18



STEP 18: Now it's time to get your ol' USB drive – the one you used to backup all your saves, etc. Plug that wee bugger back in there and get to restoring your hard drive. It's a simple process, just head back to the tab you used to backup your info in the first place and select 'Back Up'.

19



STEP 19: You'll have to wait until the files are transferred from your USB drive to your new PS3 HDD, but once that's done and dusted, you should be good to go. Now pause, and marvel at the insane amount of storage space at your beck and call. No need to worry about deleting precious installs any more.

WHAT SHOULD I DO WITH ALL THIS SPACE!?

Well, you can forget about any worries you might have with regards to downloads, mandatory installs, PSN games or game saves, that's for sure. As for the rest of the space – well, it's purely up to your good self. We've been using our PS3 as a media centre, and to make things easy we've copied all kinds of media – music, movies, etc – across to our PS3 for easy access. With streaming, your PC has to be on at all times, but if the file in question has been transferred to your PS3's HDD, that problem doesn't exist. Use this space to transform your PS3 into a media hub – that's our advice!

DISCLAIMER: Official PlayStation takes no responsibility for damaged or the destruction of your PlayStation 3. Please be very careful or seek professional assistance. Ensure you unplug your PS3 from the wall socket before starting this project. We are not responsible if you hurt yourself or your gear.

WORDS: VANESSA MORGAN

HOME GROWN!

It's January, it's the time for Aussie pride, it's time to celebrate what's ours! Aussies are doing more than just serving in bars around the world; you'll find them in most big development studios worldwide.

LUCASARTS

A company known as much for its namesake as its innovative adventure games has produced many, many *Star Wars* games and currently has an Indy game in the works.



Name: Sean Hammond
Position: External Technical Director
Country based: San Francisco, USA

OPS: Where did you get your start in the games industry?

Sean Hammond: I started as a game engine programmer at Auran in Brisbane.

I had been writing game demos on my PC at home and wondering if I could make a career out of it. When I saw Auran's job ad in the newspaper I knew this was exactly what I wanted to do.

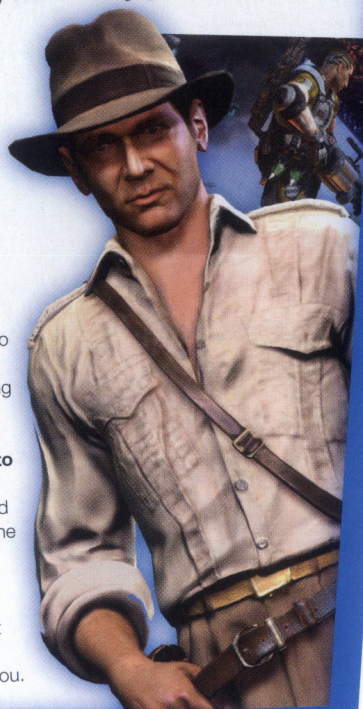
I was also involved in starting a games studio in 1999. We had to build everything ourselves and I learnt a lot about how the industry works. Almost everyday I was working on something new and having this knowledge really helped me out in the future.

OPS: What would you tell other Aussies wanting to break into your field?

Sean: Learn as much as you can about making games. Download a game engine and start building something of your own. Read all the tutorials and experiment with your own ideas. Don't give up!

OPS: Where do you think the future of gaming lies?

Sean: I think we will see a greater variety of games designed to fit your lifestyle. Whether you have 10 minutes, all day, or if you like to play online instead of single-player, there will be something to suit you.



BLUE TONGUE ENTERTAINMENT

Founded in 1995, Blue Tongue Entertainment started off with *AFL Finals Fever* and have gone on to create a variety of furry favourites on various consoles.



Name: Robert S Blackadder
Position: Project Director
Country based: Melbourne, Australia

OPS: How did you get started in the games industry?

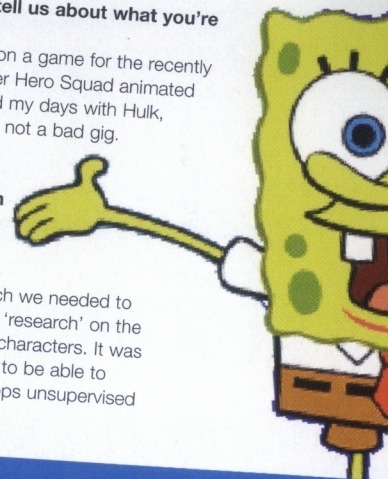
Robert S Blackadder: I started as an engineer doing contract code work for Amiga and 3DO games. My first 'real' game job was at LucasArts where I worked on lots of... you guessed it *Star Wars* games plus a game called *Gladius* which I'm quite proud of as well.

OPS: What can you tell us about what you're working on now?

Robert: I'm working on a game for the recently announced *Marvel Super Hero Squad* animated series. So I get to spend my days with Hulk, Wolverine and Iron Man, not a bad gig.

OPS: What anecdote sums up your career in gaming?

Robert: While working on a *Star Wars* game we convinced Skywalker ranch we needed to go into the archives to do 'research' on the various classic *Star Wars* characters. It was a geeks dream come true to be able to poke around in the old props unsupervised for a few hours.



THQ STUDIO

A games company and studio that needs no introduction, THQ worldwide has produced *Saints Row*, *Red Faction*, *MX vs ATV* and *Company of Heroes*. Locally they've produced Nickelodeon and Disney Pixar titles.



Name: Jon Cartwright
Company: THQ Studio Australia
Position: Director of Production
Country based: Australia

OPS: How did you get started in the games industry?

Jon Cartwright: We got a home computer when I was a kid and of course I wanted to

make my own games, doesn't everyone? So I taught myself BASIC and wrote a bunch of simple games for myself. But the 'proper' games were being written in assembly language so I taught myself that and started writing better games. So I started getting stuff published when I was 15 and writing games in my spare time, after school and on weekends. I'm happy to say I've never had a 'proper job' yet!

OPS: What can you tell us about what you're working on at the moment?

Jon: Well, we're just shy of 100 people and we've got a couple of teams here working on two very different titles. As well as two game teams, we also have our core technology team in-house; whilst we used Unreal on *Frontlines*, our new titles are using our own technology. We have a bunch of really smart guys making the PS3 really perform; it's a mix of Aussies and folks from overseas who've found out that Brisbane's the best place to be.

OPS: What anecdote sums up your career in gaming?

Jon: Going to Tokyo Game Show in 2000 was a bizarre experience for all sorts of reasons. You see the pictures of all the women in costumes but nothing prepares you for it. I was on a stand next to the Korean trade stand and amongst other things they were showing an arcade cabinet where the controller was an outsized hand, and the gameplay involved... well there's no nice way to say it, but you had to push the index finger up a bottom with some force to win prizes. If that wasn't crazy enough they had two Japanese girls dressed up to promote the thing; one as a giant hand with index finger and the other as a cartoon whirl of poo, complete with flies. I'm not making this up, I promise! <http://www.destructoid.com/japan-game-watch-boonga-boonga>

TGS was on just a few weeks after the PS2 launched, and of course everyone said it was a sell-out and I had a snowball's chance in hell of picking one up. But I wandered around Akihabara with another programmer for hours and eventually found one after looking in dozens of shops. They weren't on display and I was lucky enough to be stood behind a Japanese man who was buying one, so I just chanced my arm and asked "Playstation 2?" and they got one from under the counter for me. There was much *Tekken* playing back at the hotel that night let me tell you.

OPS: Where do you think the future of gaming lies?

Games used to be such a solitary activity, as kids we were all in our bedrooms playing on our Spectrums or whatever. But now it's so much more social, and socially acceptable. Sharing experiences and communicating online through games could become the next big thing; is *PlayStation home* or *LittleBigPlanet* going to be the Facebook of gaming? Time will tell, but think about it: every console available today, whether handheld or underneath your TV, has the capability to go online. Then, of course, there's your mobile phone.



Name: Derek Proud
Company: THQ
Position: Project Manager
Country based: Australia

OPS: How did you get started in the gaming industry?

Derek Proud: A friend of mine started

working for SEGA Ozisoft in their PR department, and hired me to help with some events. From there I started working at the Sega Hotline full time. The first game I really had the opportunity to work on in a production sense was *Shane Warne Cricket* for the Mega Drive.

OPS: What can you tell us about what you're working on at the moment?

Derek: Currently I manage eight games, which are being developed by various companies in Australia and overseas. These include games based on Pixar and Nickelodeon licenses, and THQ developed franchises like *MX vs. ATV*.

OPS: What experience in the past best sums up your career in the gaming industry?

Derek: I remember one time we were working back late on *Destroy All Humans!*. The design team and I left to get some dinner and we were in this slightly trendy kind of restaurant in Brisbane. The lead designer was explaining in all seriousness how the anal probe would work; "so when you fire the anal probe at a human they run around clutching their ass until their brain pops out their heads". As he was saying this I saw a waitress come up behind him ready to take our order. She looked at the back of his head in horror and walked away.

OPS: What advice would you give other Aussies about wanting to break into game development/production?

Find a field and specialize in it. We draw people from all sorts of disciplines; programming, music, art, 3D animation, script writing, production, game design, technical art and many more. You need to do a lot of research and find out what skills interest you and how they might be used in the making of a computer game.



THE CREATIVE ASSEMBLY

The creators of *Stormrise*, The Creative Assembly has lead the way with the *Total War* series and are hoping to re-energise the RTS genre.



Name: George Fidler
Position: General Manager
Country based: Brisbane, Australia

OPS: How did you get started in the industry?

George Fidler: In 1989, Electronic Arts recruited me to help establish their publishing business in Australia. After five years in publishing, I moved across to product development to create some local Australian sports products, under the EA Sports banner. We used The Creative Assembly (UK) studio to develop many of these sports titles, including Rugby Union, Rugby League, Cricket and even Australian Rules titles! When I finally decided to leave EA, Creative Assembly asked me to establish a studio in

Australia and so the CA Brisbane studio was born. A few years later, we were acquired by SEGA and we have never looked back.

OPS: What can you tell us about what you're working on now?

George: Several years ago we challenged ourselves to invent a strategy game, purpose built for consoles. The *Total War* franchise had given us excellent grounding in the strategy space on PC, but no one had really cracked the "strategy on console" market. We managed to convince Sega to let us have a crack at it. *Stormrise* is our realisation of that challenge. It's a purpose built console strategy game, based on an original story and world.

OPS: Where do you think the future of gaming lies?

George: In our imagination. Don't believe all the doom and gloom. Go create the future.



Name: Michael Baxter
Position: Lead Animator

OPS: How did you get started in the industry?

Michael Baxter: A friend at my Kung Fu class asked me if I wanted a job in the games industry, he was an Art Director. I was always talking to him about games and games design and he knew I had some talent as an artist. I started on a government training scheme, really low wages, and after six months was taken on as an employee. I learnt the hard way, there were no university courses for games development back in the old days (1994).



Name: Ashley Parker
Position: Senior Producer

OPS: How did you get started in the industry?

Ashley Parker: I started out at sixteen working on the old W-Industries Virtual Reality machines based on the Amiga architecture. I used to place people on the machines and teach them how to play *Dactyl Nightmare*.

I paid my dues back in the day, the worst of which was with *Mickey Mouse in Letterland* on the NES. QAing that

for months left me internally scarred and yet strangely did nothing to improve my spelling and grammar.



Name: Artem Kulakov
Position: Lead Programmer

OPS: How did you get started in the industry?

Artem Kulakov: A small independent games company rented an office in the basement of my high school. They needed a junior programmer. The rest is history.



Name: Kim Sellentin
Position: Associate Producer

OPS: Where do you think the future of gaming lies?

Kim Sellentin: I think we'll see a trend to hybridise genres, for example, an RTS game that rolls some FPS elements into its gameplay. We'll need to be more innovative in the form of new control schemes, more interactivity, and fresh gameplay ideas, as the market matures.



Name: Dan Toose
Position: Designer

OPS: How did you get started in the industry?

Dan Toose: Actually, as a games journalist... Including time working on Official PlayStation Mag! I'd travelled to Creative Assembly back when they were making *Rome: Total War* for PC, met the team, and they offered me a job not long after.



Name: Prasant Moorthy
Position: Senior Designer

OPS: How did you get started in the industry?

Prasant Moorthy: My childhood dream job was to make computer games. Unfortunately I got sidetracked after studying financial maths at uni and spent most of my twenties working in banking, managing IT projects and writing big boring spreadsheets. Then, one day I saw that Creative Assembly were hiring producers and game designers, checked out the job spec I realised I'd be managing IT projects and writing big not-so-boring spreadsheets to work out how many people you'd kill if your weapons changed.



UBISOFT SHANGHAI

Shanghai is the largest city in China with over 20 million people in its extended metropolitan area. It is also home to Ubisoft's China branch and the creative team behind *Tom Clancy's EndWar*.



Name: Michael de Plater
Position: Creative Director
Country based: Shanghai, China

OPS: How did you get started in the industry?

Michael de Plater: Working on the *Total War* series with The Creative Assembly.

Then as a Producer and Designer for EA Asia Pacific working on all the local EA Sports titles based on Rugby League, Cricket and AFL. Also as a Producer working with Beam software on *KKnd* which was an RTS.

OPS: What can you tell us about what you're working on?

Michael: I just finished *Tom Clancy's EndWar*, which is an epic wargame on the battlefields of World War III. It's also a step forward for RTS on consoles with very accessible controls, camera and gameplay.

OPS: What sums up your career in gaming

Michael: I just think I'm incredibly lucky to get paid to do something that's basically the same as what I did for fun when I was a four year old and sticking toy soldiers on a chess board, rolling dice to see who got shot and burning them with a bic lighter when they were killed.

OPS: What would you tell other Aussies wanting to break into your exclusive field?

Michael: If you want to be writer, then write. If you want to be a game designer then design games. Today and tomorrow. You don't need to wait to get into the industry because there are dozens of great modding tools, editors and communities to let you create games now.

KROME STUDIOS

Krome is the largest independent videogame developers with over 300 staff based in Brisbane, Adelaide and Melbourne. They line up to tell us how us how they made it into the industry.



Name: George Stamatiadis
Position: Composer/ Sound Designer
Luck, knowing people and being in the right place at the right time. This was a long time ago when the local industry was a hell of a lot smaller than it is today.



Name: Lindsay Parmenter
Position: Executive Producer
My brother was already working for Krome, after completing a course at QANTM and got me an interview for a QA position. I got the job and ended up testing several games that year (*Extremely Goofy Skateboarding*, *Barbie Beach Vacation* and *Sunny Garcia Surfing*). From there, I ended up doing an Assistant Producer role on *TY the Tasmanian Tiger*; Producer on *Jimmy Neutron: Jet Fusion*, *TY the Tasmanian Tiger: Bush Rescue*, *TY the Tasmanian Tiger: Night of the Quinkan* and Senior Producer on *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed*.



Name: Scott Savage
Position: QA Manager
I attended a talk about the role of writers in the video game industry, which was hosted by some industry professionals. They outlined the various aspects of writing for video games and production. The talk was finished with some question and answer time in which they spoke about ways to get into the industry. One of those ways was through QA. They mentioned a few websites to keep an eye on for job openings and within a few days of checking the sites I noticed an opening for nightshift testers at Krome. I applied and the rest, as they say, is history.

PANDEMIC STUDIOS

With offices in Brisbane and Los Angeles, Pandemic are best known for titles such as *Full Spectrum Warrior*, *Destroy all Humans! 2* and *Mercenaries*.



Name: Shane Gavin
Position: Designer
Country based: Brisbane, Australia

OPS: How did you get started in the industry?

Shane Gavin: I was doing free features and reviews for a local website called 'Big Kid' when I heard about a job opening at Krome Studios in their QA department. From there I moved up through production before taking a hiatus for a few years and returning to work in the design department at Pandemic Studios.

OPS: What anecdote/situation sums up your career in gaming?

Shane: Well there was this Sony party at Fox in Brisbane during GCAP a few years

back. Sony put on a bar tab and fired up Singstar for all of us to drink and sing along with. I got drunk enough to belt out a Bowie number before going up to the rooftop. That's where a bunch of us ran into Tsutomu Kuono (*LocoRoco*), we proceeded to get drunk with him and talk about games even though we knew he had to get up and give a speech the next morning at about 8am. The next morning Tsutomu pointed out one of my friends as the reason for his state of mind during the talk on the making of *LocoRoco*. I don't know how that sums up my career, but it was pretty funny and made for a memorable talk.

OPS: What would you tell other Aussies wanting to break into your field?

Shane: There are four key things that a designer should have if they want to get their foot in the door

1. Play heaps of games, tabletop and video, good and bad, then critique them.
 - a. How can they be improved?
 - b. What did they do right?
 - c. What could the game have done without?
2. Experiment with editors, build levels and have your friends play them, or do a course at a local college
3. Have a demo/level ready to show along with supporting documentation.
4. Passion.

The most important thing to have is passion. If you don't love what you are doing, do something else.



TANTALUS INTERACTIVE

Melbourne based games studio Tantalus Interactive, the minds behind *MX vs ATV Untamed* on PSP, tell us where they think the future of gaming stands.

Name: Benjamin Han

Position: Programmer

Country based: Melbourne, Australia

OPS: Where do you think the future of gaming lies?

Benjamin: I think the future is in digitally distributed games where small short development cycle games can be utilised. Hopefully with this, new genres of games will continue to be made and flourish.

Name: David Lally

Position: Programmer

Country based: Melbourne, Australia

OPS: Where do you think the future of gaming lies?

David: I'm beginning to believe that the casual gamer is the gamer who will define the future. With the current generation of consoles, games are getting bigger and much more expensive to make. Will there come a time when the costs to make one of these glorious HD epic games vastly outweigh the rewards? I feel that with smaller, simpler games comes the chance to get back to the glory days of game development where we can innovate and truly create some first class games that will appeal to all gamers, casual and hardcore.

Name: Nick Kerber

Position: Lead Artist

Country based: Melbourne, Australia

OPS: Where do you think the future of gaming lies?

Nick: Gaming has taken a few twists and turns over the past year, it's gone from high end large stories like *Heavenly Sword*, to budget gimmicky titles like *Wii Music*. We've gone from lone gamers sitting in the basement to the whole family waiving and dancing around the living room. I think over the long term gaming will become more like the board games of yesteryear. Where people will be playing games together around the coffee table. Where the extreme needs for high graphics, or gimmicky peripherals, will be replaced in favor of fun.



Make sure your Boys grow
BIG AND STRONG

So they can fight off the
Chimeran Invasion!



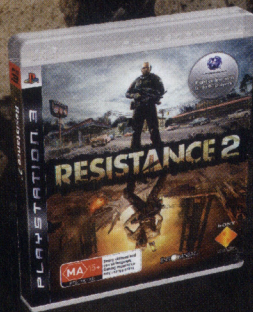
FREE WITH A
PLAYSTATION®3*



Strong violence and
coarse language.
Gaming experience
may change online.

In the war to save humanity,
every man is needed.

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PLAYSTATION 3

REVIEW RATING

PlayStation
GOLD AWARD

PlayStation
SILVER AWARD

PlayStation
BRONZE AWARD

10 Incredible. While a 10 doesn't necessarily mean a game is perfect – it's as near as dammit, and is a shining example of all that is right with gaming. This is the kind of game we live for.

9 Excellent. Outstanding in every way. Some negligible blemishes hold it back from being a 10, but is almost definitely the best in its genre, and well worth buying.

8 Great. A game receiving this score comes highly recommended. Despite a few issues here and there, this title is ahead of the pack in most departments.

7 Good. A robust game where the noticeable issues can be overlooked in lieu of the overall experience provided. Still well worth a look at this stage.

6 Decent. This game will have some pretty glaring flaws, and possibly not be worth recommending. Will still have some redeeming features, however...

5 Mediocre. This game will be entertaining in parts without excelling anywhere, yet equally sub par in others without being outright awful.

4 Poor. Will be unrefined, undercooked and let down by shoddy execution and poor attention to detail. This game should be avoided at all costs.

3 Very disappointing. This game is fundamentally flawed in a number of ways – uninspired, boring and flawed in every way...

2 Terrible. Virtually everything about this game is guff beyond belief, and some parts will simply be broken. Not worth the effort.

1 The worst. This score is reserved for the very worst that gaming has to offer. This game will be an offensive, putrid, mess with zero redeeming qualities.

We choose to review our games on a super-slick Full HD 1080p 40" Bravia X-series for the best picture possible. This sucker melts eyeballs!



Where did all the reviews go? Is this some sort of game or something... is it hide and seek? Because after the tsunami like tidal wave of quality, AAA releases, we're starting to see said wave recede and there's not much left to forage across this bleak gaming landscape. This truly is a time to take stock, play through the hefty backlog of games you've built up, and look forward to the might that is the 2009 line-up.

That being said – we do have *LocoRoco 2*, sequel to one our favourite PSP games of all time. I took

this one home, pried the PSP from my wife's hands and got enough hands on to do an extensive review.

So yes, for the first time since I can remember, a PSP game is our lead review in the mag – an honour that I think *LocoRoco 2* deserves.

Head overleaf for our final verdict of ultimate JUSTICE!

Mark Serrels

MARK SERRELS

WE CAN'T STOP PLAYING...



KILLZONE 2 BETA

In short, the beta is frickin' radular. It looks incredible, and the gameplay is starting to match up to those stellar visuals. Can't wait for the final game.



RESISTANCE 2

There's just so much game... where do we start? The co-op is probably the biggest revelation here – it really is in a class of its very own.



STREET FIGHTER IV

We just got an early copy... to keep! We're loving the return to 2D far more than we imagined we would. It feels like 1991 all over again!



“Do these stripes make my arse look big?” “Um...Yes”



WHAT THE HELL ARE THEY SINGING!?

While it sounds like the LocoRoco are singing in a foreign language, the whole thing is actually nonsense. Well, not exactly nonsense – apparently the *LocoRoco* language was actually invented by the game's designer, Tsutomu Kouno. We basically think that the *LocoRoco* is just Mr Kouno making fun of languages he actually can't speak... if you listen closely some words in Spanish, Japanese and other languages can almost be deciphered.



INFO

GENRE: ACTION
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
DEVELOPER: SONY
PLAYERS: 1
PRICE: \$49.95

LOCOROCO 2

Butterscotch rainbows and moonbeam smiles!

Hey depressed emo kid! Yes, you there! You with the floppy fringe, antisocial behaviour and the vitamin-deficient, pallid skin. Boy, have we got news for you. Throw your Prozac prescription back at the friendly GP with gusto. No longer will you have to deal with smothering parents, schoolyard bullies and the throbbing dark pain in your soul.

Because we are your doctor now, we are your psychiatrist, and we're chucking your old prescription in the shredder as we speak – we've got some new medicine for you, one that's guaranteed to replace the sadness in your heart with a euphoric joy.

We're prescribing you with a full course of *LocoRoco 2* – if this game

doesn't warm the cockles of your heart, then you simply don't have one.

BLOBULAR

If you've played the original *LocoRoco* you'll know the deal – you guide a little coloured blob, collect other blobs, then coagulate to form a bigger, singular coloured blob. You then take this coagulated blob and bounce around in a blobby manner until you have a blob of such blobby proportions that you can blob around the environment and out-blob anything in terms of blobbiness.

Yep, that's right, if there was any one word that could adequately describe *LocoRoco* it would be 'blobular'. Which isn't actually a word – we just made it up.

WE 'HEART' LOCOROCO

In a market where developers seem content to pimp sugar-free derivatives of their major franchises, *LocoRoco* stands tall as the best example of a game built and designed solely for the PSP.

The controls are simple, and use – for the most part – only three buttons, you don't even need the d-pad. Instead of controlling the *LocoRoco* themselves, you tilt the stylised world they inhabit, and they respond accordingly.

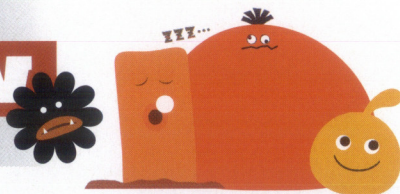
Of course, the whole thing sounds utterly boring on paper, but to describe it in such terms is to make it completely redundant – it's all in the execution which, in *LocoRoco 2*, is practically flawless.

Visually, *LocoRoco* is up there with

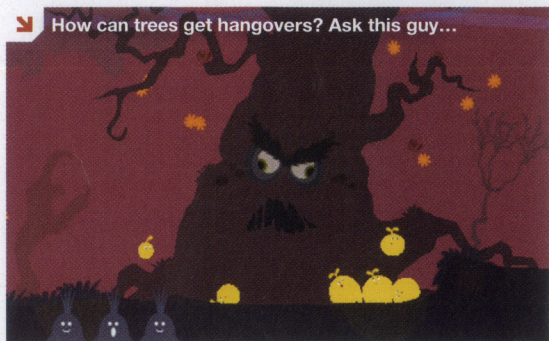
the most striking videogames we've ever seen. Sure, it can't compete with high-end PSP productions like *Chains of Olympus* and the *GTA* titles, but the art design is so vibrant, and so perfectly in tune with the vibe of *LocoRoco*. The look of the game intertwines perfectly with the gameplay in a seamless match of form and function, the end result of which is you, the player, breaking out into a broad, genuine, inescapable smile.

MUSIC TO OUR EARS

Completing this sugary trifecta, this axis of cute, is the music and inspired sound design of *LocoRoco 2*. This is undoubtedly where the magic happens. The songs, designed to sound like they're being



How can trees get hangovers? Ask this guy...



Your dancing days are done, Happy Feet!



Awesome blue guy party is AWESOME!

sung by the *LocoRoco* you're controlling, are like... are like – how the hell do we describe this without reducing it to a twee-like sentiment? They're like supping from a glass filled with liquid sunshine. Like having a vibrant, fresh rainbow injected directly into your veins. Like having a six year old's brain transfused into your skull and watching *Jungle Book* for the first time. It's truly magical stuff, and will ward any dark cloud from your vicinity the very instant you start playing.

Playing *LocoRoco 2* just makes us feel happy is all.

But if you played the original *LocoRoco*, you'll know all about that already. You'll also know that, while the first title played like a dream, it suffered from a lack of variety in the game design – once you'd played the first couple of levels, you'd essentially played them all.

Well, this time round, Sony have added a little more to the syrupy mix, transforming what was previously a ridiculously cute one-trick pony, into one of those cool (but still totally cute) ponies that can do loads of rad tricks.

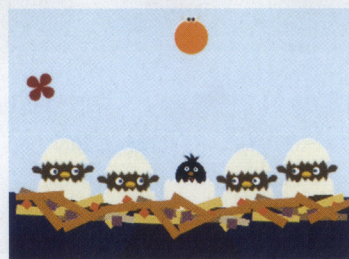
ROLLING CHANGES

Some of these changes work well, others are a little more clunky. Starting with the good – the *LocoRoco* can now go underwater, which adds a whole new environment and set of physics into the *LocoRoco* universe. It could have ruined the balance of the game, but thankfully it merely compliments it.

The *LocoRoco*'s new ability to hop into a crazy rock-type thing, and smash their way through levels is another cool addition – and is the closest thing *LocoRoco 2* comes to a power up mechanic. It all adds up to smart level design, changing the pace of the game, thus delivering you from blob fatigue.

Other additions, such as the rhythm based button pressing sequences (clearly inspired by *Patapon*) work less well, mainly due to the fact that the beat seems a bit off and there never really seems to be an explanation as to why succeeding in this task really matters.

It seems to be a reaction to criticism of the previous *LocoRoco*, which stated that the game mechanics were overly



simple and repetitive, but where *LocoRoco 2* could have suffered from having too many veggies in the brew, it actually works brilliantly, providing variety and pacing to the already solid base gameplay.

But ultimately, breaking down the *LocoRoco* experience into a set of discrete parts is pointless as we were all set to give you our wholehearted recommendation the very second we made our return to the world of *LocoRoco*. The music, the daft, vacant grin on the face of the *LocoRoco* as you navigate them through their universe, and the sheer joy and feel of the game had us in the thrall of its black magic instantly.

You may not be susceptible to this magic, and the huge injection of sweet, sweet syrupy sugar may cause you to vomit, but we couldn't help but succumb. We love this game, and if you had any kind of interest in the first *LocoRoco*, we're sure that you will too. **Mark Serrels**

LIFE IS PAINFUL

We honestly believe that *LocoRoco* is a sure fire cure for depression. Just imagine all the legendary people we could have saved had *LocoRoco* been in their lives...



VAN GOGH

Although, arguably, his work wouldn't have been so dark and intense, we wonder if ol' Vincent would have been so quick to saw off one of his lugs if he had a PSP and *LocoRoco*.



KURT COBAIN

Oh boy, maybe grunge wouldn't exist, and maybe Nirvana would now be working on the soundtrack to *Enchanted 2: Chant Harder*, but we're convinced Mr Cobain would still be around if he'd played *LocoRoco 2*.



OWEN WILSON

We can still save this guy! Someone buy this guy a PSP and *LocoRoco* – STAT! If we can force him to spend some time in *LocoRoco* land, surely the tears of this clown will dry up, and we'll get *Wedding Crashers 2*!



FINAL SAY:

• Controls feel perfect
• The music is awesome

• Rhythm section doesn't work well
• Maybe too cute (if you're heartless)

VERDICT:
Few games will make you smile more vibrantly...

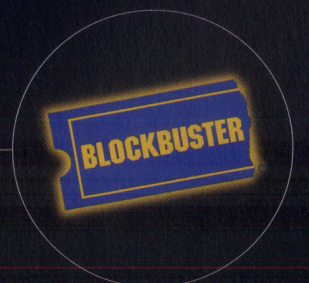
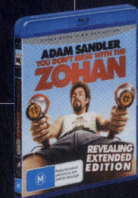
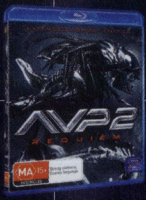
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INFO

GENRE: ACTION
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: SEGA
DEVELOPER: SONIC TEAM
PLAYERS: 1
PRICE: \$99.95



WORSE THAN WIPEOUT HD | **BETTER THAN** THE LAST ONE

SONIC UNLEASHED

Yet another retro remake with a split personality



If Sonic were human, he'd be robbing convenience stores by now. Like a child star who has outlived his usefulness, abandoned by former sycophants to a merciless world. Mario has had the benefit of more supportive peers, and the loving attention of Shigeru Miyamoto to help adjust to each new generation of consoles. But the world's favourite blue hedgehog has sown the wind and reaped the whirlwind. The more his games veer away from his classic high-speed platforming, the more they suck.

Sonic Unleashed is different, though – an honest-to-God stab at getting back to the roots of the series. Well, half of it is, at any rate. Levels alternate between day and night, with the *Sonic* gameplay of the early '90s prevailing while the sun is up. Things start off with an above-and-behind view of our hero, with the player obliged to steer him around corners, over speed pads, and through as many hovering gold rings as possible.

Some low placed barriers force him to slide, while in other situations it's prudent to jump. It's frequently impossible to advance unless you press the homing attack button, which will conveniently see him surge through the air towards the nearest baddie. If you come across a gap that's too far to jump, then it probably means there's a flying enemy buzzing about that you haven't noticed – a homing attack or two and you'll be home free.

Yes, the controls are simple, but the difficulty does not stem from

mastering them. It stems from reacting to events. Sonic moves through his world at blistering speed, and you only have a fraction of time to respond to obstacles.

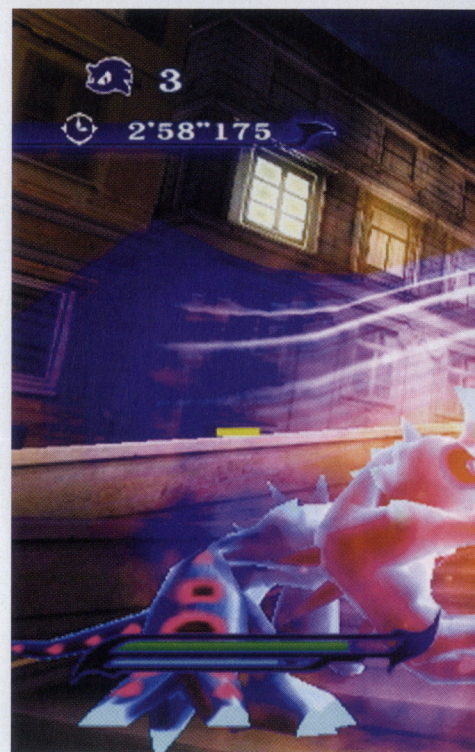
This peril is at its greatest in the segments when the view switches to side on, and the on-rails challenges begin. Veterans will recognise this perspective as a homage to Sonic's side-scrolling origins. Veterans will also find their twitchy, aging nervous systems unequal to the task.

If anything, this is a good thing. Once again, Sonic is outdoors, under blue skies and warm sunshine, and tearing along as fast as the graphics hardware will allow. It's a little too easy to cock up, and linear as hell, but this is the real Sonic.

Well, at least until the sun goes down, and he turns into a lumbering, monster. This is when the real trouble begins.

It's rare that one comes across a game that induces motion sickness. Ah, so many happy memories of family car trips ruined by a film of sick on the rear passenger door. Here, the culprit is velocitation. That's moving from one speed to another, and being left with the profound notion that something is very, very wrong. Like when you leave the freeway, and feel like you're going a lot slower than you really are.

In this case, it's when you leave the high-speed daytime levels, and start plodding through darkened platform environments in Sonic's new were-hog form. Sure, he can smash through walls with his powerful arms, and slash through robot nasties with his savage claws. But he's so slow! After even a few minutes of



streaking through the blue skies and vast freeways of Sonic's daytime world, his night-time lycanthropic shenanigans feel like, well... like just another platform game.

Even his new, stretchy arms feel off. Granted, they're a gimmick for seizing enemies, and for grabbing high ledges and pulling himself up. But again, the motion involved feels... off. If your stomach is weak, you'll feel it churn as the impossible unfolds. In that sense, it would be fair to say that half of the game is sickening.

It would also be fair to say that *Sonic Unleashed* is not a write-off. The graphics are amazing. The lighting is incredible, creating not only a profound sense of presence, but also an impression of scale. Combined with the whimsically exaggerated character designs, the pointless free-roaming RPG segments look like something out of Pixar's *Ratatouille*.

Why build a bridge that looks like a dragon? Why not?



CHIP OFF THE OLD BLOCK

Sonic's new best friend is a bit special. A little floating pink pixie fellow called Chip, this obnoxiously voiced sidekick has lost his memory, and Sonic, being a fellow who sorts things out, has resolved to find it.

Don't care? Tough chippies. The agonising cutscenes cannot be skipped, and must all be watched.



"Take a big red slap, from my big white hand!"

There are some limited stat-managing elements – each level completed nets points that you can spend to boost the Sonic and were-hog stats that appeal to you the most.

This game's biggest asset by far is that it isn't downright terrible. That is, it's better than that abortion of a *Sonic* game that limped onto the PS3 in early '07. Barring the inherently twitchy nature of steering daytime Sonic at ridiculous speeds, the game is not broken. It just isn't amazing. Older gamers will find their nostalgia withers upon playing. Gamers with their years of snooty discrimination ahead of them may get an innocent jolly or two before the repetitive gameplay drains their attention.

In short, *Wipeout HD* this ain't. But it ain't half bad, either. Well, it ain't 3/4 bad. **Clint McCreadie**

FINAL SAY:

• Decent day time levels
• Gorgeous graphics

• Night-time levels grate
• Pointless RPG elements

VERDICT:
The least awful
Sonic game in
years.

6

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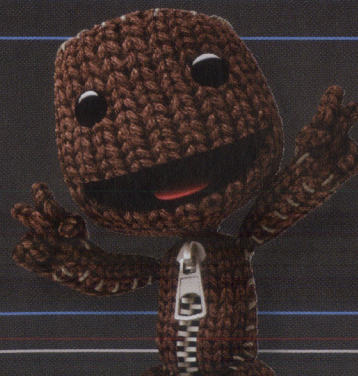
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IN REVIEW

Singstar Vol.3



INFO

GENRE: PARTY
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
DEVELOPER: LONDON STUDIO
PLAYERS: 1-8
PRICE: \$59.95

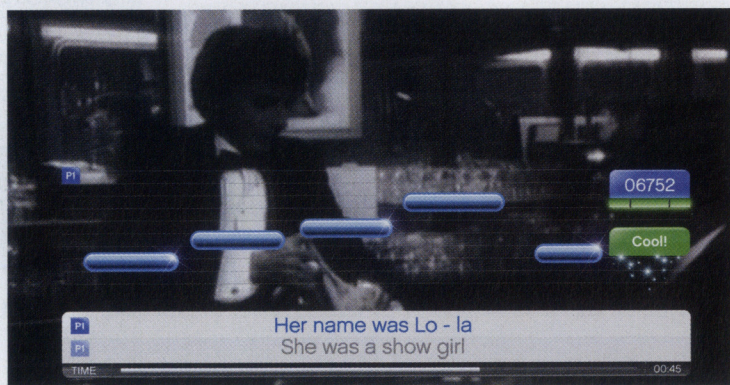
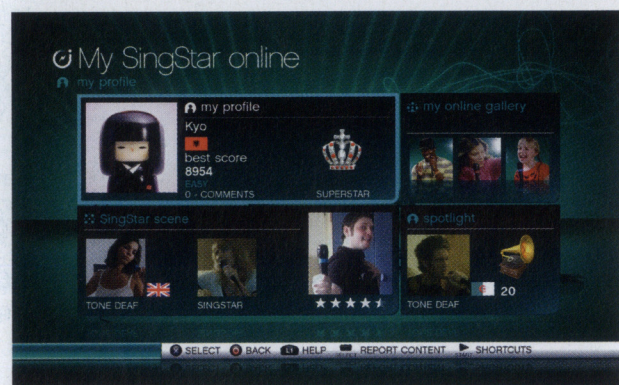
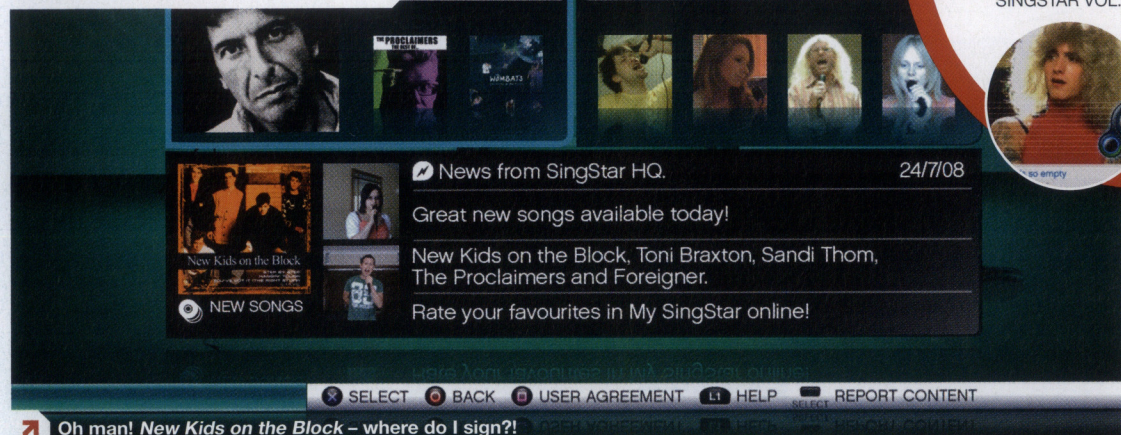


WORSE THAN
SINGSTAR VOL.2

BETTER THAN
DISNEY SING IT



Bil - lie Jean -
She's



SINGSTAR VOL.3

Coldplay feat. Akon vs. Queen Kate Bush & Timbaland feat. Fergie...

When Sony spawned the original *SingStar* on PS2 they likely didn't realise the phenomenon they were unleashing. Sure, they wanted it to work – preying on that perverse quirk of humanity to want to sing your lungs out even if you have all the pitch-perfection of a malfunctioning jackhammer, or a sheep underneath said jackhammer if you've downed the odd alcoholic beverage or six – but this went supernova.

When the PS3 moseyed along, it was obvious that *SingStar* would make the transition. Amidst great fanfare and many broken promises it eventually hit, with an odd assortment of songs obviously compiled in Old Blighty. Seriously, other than stripy-topped indie kids, who'd heard of Orson, *Razorlight*, *The Zutons* or *The Automatic* upon these shores? There was the newly concocted online *SingStore*, but that cost big – \$2.45 per song adds up quickly. Oh, and where was the compatibility with our PS2

SingStar libraries that was promised before launch? Hopefully the great goddess of lead times will have us egg-faced by the time you read this and Sony will have finally pumped this update out... hopefully.

The point we're trying to make is that Sony have let an immensely profitable cash cow stray from the PS3 paddock. They nailed it on the PS2 with two important moves... themed compilations – rather than hodgepodes – and localisation, rather than treating Australia like an English county.

So, to the latest PS3 hodgepodge, *Singstar Vol.3*, featuring 30 songs ranging from modern rap to '70s pap. We challenge anybody to know all 30 songs well, let alone be able to – or want to – sing them.

First up, the 1970s. Dave Bowie's stereo spectacular 'Space Oddity' and Queen's 'Killer Queen' = tasty start. Then Leo Sayer's irritating 'You Make Me Feel Like Dancing' and Bazza Manilow's

'Copacabana'. Erm thanks guys...

The '80s offers eight choices. From the sublime – *Heaven 17*'s 'Temptation' and the awesomely trashy *Transvision Vamp* ode to meh, 'Baby I Don't Care' – to the awful – Macca and Stevie's elegy to posh wood and African poachers, 'Ebony and Ivory' and punk sell-out Feargal Sharkey's 'A Good Heart'. Michael Jackson's awesome 'Billie Jean' is a highlight (separate the man from the music, m'kay?), whilst those with 20 octave ranges will delight in squealing out Kate Bush's 'Babooshka' or The Communards' cover of 'Never Can Say Goodbye'. We're assured Lionel Richie's rhetorically titled 'All Night Long (All Night)' is beloved of retro night patrons everywhere – which is why we avoid such places.

The decade that pretty much everybody's forgotten musically, the '90s, offers few treats. No matter how inebriated you are, you can always sing better than Shaun Ryder,

so Happy Mondays' 'Kinky Afro' is welcome. Feeling angsty? A dose of the *Smumpkins* '1979' will assist in easing the pain. Feeling downright suicidal? Aerosmith's 'Cryin'' will help you finish the job. *Texas* and *Take That* will satisfy those who don't care much about music, whilst nobody can sing 'Constant Craving' as well as the capital letter-defying kd lang, so why try?

Which brings us to the noughties. Of 11 tracks, seven have gone top four in Australia, so it's hard to knock whoever compiles these things – unless you're a jaded hack who thinks most recent chart toppers are complete toss. If you're neither jaded nor a hack, such 'choons' as Fergie's 'Big Girls Don't Cry', Gwen Stefani's 'The Sweet Escape', and Dizzee Rascal featuring every single person that blew past the studio with the appallingly spelled 'Dance Wiv Me' may get the heart racing. Then there are two number ones from *Timbaland* featuring interlopers – 'The Way I Are' and

Michael Jackson. He's bad.
And not in a good way

OH POOP!

Is it regional shenanigans, or rights issues? Frankly we don't care, all we know is that Leeds' super-ace The Pigeon Detectives have three songs – including the mighty 'I'm Not Sorry' – available on the UK SingStore, but there's no sign of them on the Aussie one. It's a bloody

freestyle

ing I ain't fak - ing this
and let me go hey

'Apologize' (didn't these people go to skool?), the *Radiohead* with no pointy bits, *Coldplay*, with 'Viva La Vida', and *Fall Out Boy*, who inexplicably seem to be barking "This Ain't a Scene, it's a Goddamn Arseface". Finally the "we've got mates at Sony" file coughs up Amy MacDonald's 'This is the Life'.

Sound appealing as a whole? Us neither. Bought singly these 30 tracks would set you back \$73.50 – a premium of \$13.55 over RRP, but who'd buy all 30 anyway?

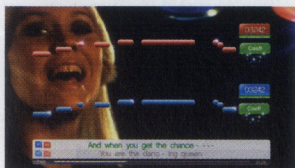
C'mon Sony – it's knockout blow time. Get more decent songs into SingStore. Give us the promised PS2 compatibility, compile with care, and get localisation happening – more than the few pissy Antipodean options currently on SingStore. Fact: Aussies who succumb to karaoke are usually 'artificially happy' – if it's down to giving us Barnesy, Farnesy and *The Angels* then so be it. We all have our guilty pleasures. **Amy Flower**



MORE? ABBASOLUTELY!

If sparkly platform heels and blue eye shadow are more your thang, then we've got news for you! Yes, Sweden's huge export that didn't look like a shoebox on wheels, *ABBA*, now have their very own *SingStar!*

20 of the super-Swedes' greatest hits – and five filler tracks – grace this disc of '70s delights. It may sound like we're taking the piss, but in all seriousness *ABBA* were to pure pop what *The Beatles* were to rock 'n' roll. Or, for younger readers, what *Nickelback* are to crap. All the smashes are here – meaning the good ('SOS', 'Knowing Me, Knowing You') and the BAD ('Thank You for the Music', 'I Do, I Do, I Bloody Do, OK?'). Utmärkt! (That's Swedish for 'excellent', we think!)



FINAL SAY:

- Well, there's something here for everybody
- This is ground control to Major Tom!
- No option to 'turn off' hated songs
- Needs one menu showing ALL owned songs (disc-based and downloads)

VERDICT:
Everybody has their faves – but is it worth \$60?

6

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TOP TYPES OF TYPES!



E-TYPE

The Jaguar so sexy it became Austin Powers' Shaguar!



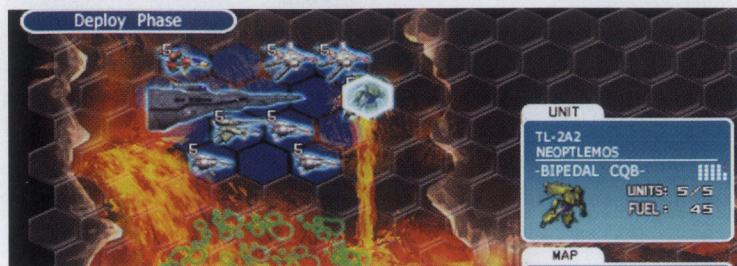
O-TYPE

The most common type of blood – O+ to be precise.



P-TYPE

A semiconductor that's positively doped. Pretty exciting, huh?



INFO

GENRE: STRATEGY
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: AFA INTERACTIVE
DEVELOPER: IREM
PLAYERS: 1-2
PRICE: \$39.95

R-TYPE TACTICS

We're mashing, but nothing's happening!

The great towering arcade god *R-Type* was predicated on one simple law: frenetic action in which you shoot all manner of alien stuff, and duly get the bejebus shot out of you in return. It's a relationship that's been tacitly understood for some 21 years now, and it's something as stable and reliable as knowing that fish and chips are really bloody fattening.

Well, it was.

For the keepers of the Arrowhead have done gone and taken all the fun out of *R-Type*. Yep, it's a shmup no longer, as Irem have seemingly joined the denture set and gone all turn-based strategy on our arses. Freneticism? Mayhem? Blistered fingers? All, crushingly, now things of the past.

Story-wise all's present and accounted for. The Bydo Empire still constitute the bad guys, whilst the player takes the role

of an Earth commander trying to stop their planet from being all absorbed and stuff by evil nasty-pasties.

Just, instead of being able to take decisive action via armament, you now have to take *considered* action via armament. If the original *R-Type* were to be likened to Hungry Hungry Hippos, this puppy's more like chess – played against one of those delightfully, not irritating at all, oh-no-sirree-Bob-type people who take at least 10 minutes per move, and smell a bit like cabbage.

So, we've more than covered the lack of 'bang bang, shoot shoot' action. However, for those of a more strategic bent, there's just an average tactical workout to be had here, deploying various wondrous craft upon a honeycomb grid, then sitting back and watching what your moves accomplish before scrutinising

what the Bydonians have to offer by way of return fire. Or, if you're feeling a touch saucy, you can play as the bad dudes, a first for the series (hey, if you're stomping on tradition, why not do it wearing jackboots?).

Ultimately, we're curious as to who this one's aimed at. Those of the itchy trigger finger persuasion that helped make *R-Type* the legend it is today will be bored within minutes. Meanwhile, those who dig on turn-based strategy are going to realise pretty quickly that whilst the levels may take a while to conquer, they're all uncannily similar.

The sprites may change, a few new cutscenes may flicker by, but there's not much in the way of progression or challenge. Ironical really, as the real thing is still one of the most challenging games to have ever gobbled a coin. **Amy Flower**

IN REVIEW

R-Type Tactics



Argh! What is all this? We just want to shoot things!



WORSE THAN REAL R-TYPE | **BETTER THAN** NICKELBACK

FINAL SAY:

• Those wonderfully familiar spacecraft
• Two player ad-hoc support

• All missions are samey
• S-l-o-w pace (to be a tad oxymoronic)

VERDICT:
It's slickly presented, but it's just not *R-Type*.

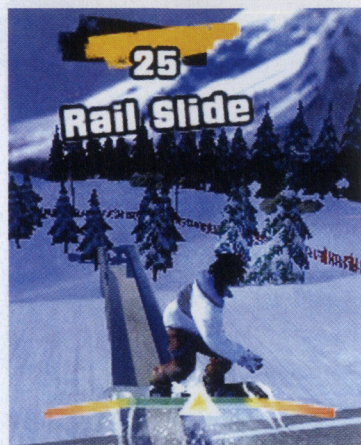
5

SHAUN WHITE IN: THE CURSE OF THE GOLDEN CROWN. COMING TO A THEATRE NEAR YOU.

The game contains a few unlockables to extend its lifespan. If you collect all the Golden Crowns on all the courses for any given mountain, you'll unlock a new character. The changes are purely cosmetic, though, and don't affect play.



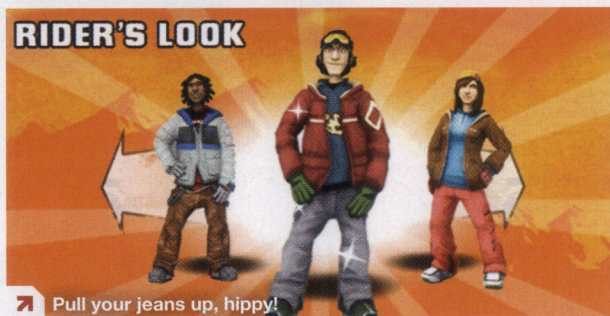
7 Pulling off Yoga moves mid-flight – Dhalsim... is that you?



50/50 chance of genitalia being crushed...



INFO
GENRE: SPORTS
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT
DEVELOPER: UBISOFT
PLAYERS: 1-2
PRICE: \$69.95



7 Pull your jeans up, hippy!



SHAUN WHITE SNOWBOARDING

Argh! My thumbs!

Why walk in a winter wonderland when you can slide down it on a thin piece of fibreglass instead? If *Shaun White Snowboarding* is anything to go by, the answer is "because it kind of hurts your thumbs".

Yes, just in time for the blisteringly hot non-denominational end-of-year gift-giving holiday season, *Shaun White* has hit the slopes and the shelves, so that players stuck in packed sweaty train carriages can pretend they're chilling off somewhere much cooler, like Neptune (NOTE: Neptune not included in the game).

Shaun White plays like most snowboard games – you go down a mountain, take a few turns, do tricks and grinds along the way, etc – but adds a few twists. Points are separated into four schools – speed, rail-slides, aerial tricks and carving (sharply

winding your way down the mountain while narrowly avoiding obstacles) and your highest score in each of these schools is added to your experience pool, and spent in the corresponding schools to permanently improve your ability, or used to buy a board to temporarily alter them.

There are five mountains in the game, each with four courses. The game starts off basic – you focus on one school per course, and you have to hit the objective score to pass the level. You also have to collect a certain number of 'Golden Crowns' and complete a 'challenge', such as crossing the finish line in under a minute.

Each mountain follows the same formula, except instead of focusing on a single school, your attention is split between two, then three, and finally all four schools. Challenges never seem to get hard, though,

and the Golden Crowns are a cinch to nab.

Movement in the game is tight and for the most part responsive, but it is with the aerial tricks that the controls fail to deliver. They're far too slow and clumsy. On the flipside, rails are far too easy, and don't require any balancing at all if you switch stances. But even if you've got a massive rail-score surplus, the fiddliness of the aerials makes completing some levels frustrating.

The courses themselves are fairly well designed. Certain sections favour certain schools, and you quickly get used to cycling through them.

The game is also only a few hours long at best, so even with a cool (no pun intended) licensed soundtrack and slick graphics, you'd be forgiven for letting *Shaun White Snowboarding* slide on by, for now.

— Nick Kolan



WORSE THAN SSX **BETTER THAN** EVOLUTION SNOWBOARDING

FINAL SAY:

• Kickin' soundtrack
 • Smooth visuals

• Over in half a day
 • Tricks are frustrating

VERDICT:
 Only for those desperate for a winter escape!

7

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CS4 DREAMWEAVER FIRST-LOOK
Page 68

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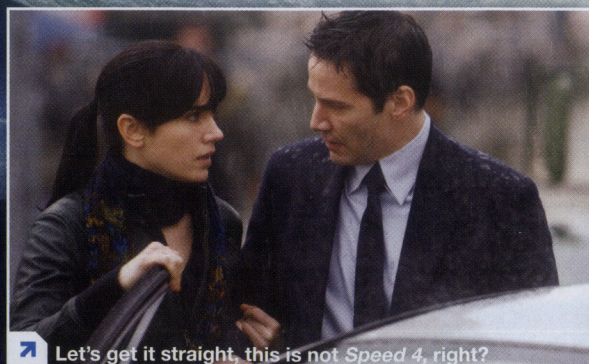
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INTERMISSION

On the box



Let's get it straight, this is not *Speed 4*, right?



Fulham finally wins a... d'oh!

CINEMAS DIRECTOR: SCOTT DERRICKSON | CAST: KEANU REEVES, JENNIFER CONNELLY AND JOHN CLEESE | IN CINEMAS: DECEMBER 26

THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (MA15+)

Casting excellence comes into play as Keanu Reeves takes on the role of the alien Klaatu, hence he only needs one facial expression throughout the entire movie. Playing the cold humanoid role works for Reeves, the character's lack of humanity doesn't need to be brought to screen through quirks and tics, like many of our alien visitors. It also works well in setting up the movie's theme of humans vs nature.

The alien visitor and his giant robot counterpart journey to Earth to stop the destruction taking place. Once Klaatu arrives, he is poked, prodded and pushed around, but will he break and in the process destroy the planet?

One of the most distinctive moments from the original 1950s film, the flying saucer scene, has thankfully been removed, in order to make way for something a little

more relevant. Instead a high tech orb launches through the water, providing a moment of awe. Yes, this movie is all about the high tech SFX. But with over 40 drafts of the script refining the plot, it's more than just something pretty to look at.

VERDICT:

Reinventions often flop, but with big ships and weapons fans will be found.

8

ALSO IN CINEMAS...

SEVEN POUNDS (MA15+)

Director: Gabriele Muccino

Cast: Will Smith

You're a suicide case at your wits' end, what do you do? You decide to take on seven strangers as your pet projects and in the process find love. Awww! It may sound mawkish, but this is a gritty, twisted little story with extremely messed up characters. Everyone is defective and that's why it works.

FROST/NIXON (M)

Director: Ron Howard

Cast: Kevin Bacon and Michael Sheen

He'd been ousted for three years before Nixon spoke up about his shove from the White House. Nixon chose a man whom he didn't think would be able to hold his own, but David Frost took up the challenge. A battle of wits ensued.

THE CURIOUS CASE OF BENJAMIN BUTTON (M)

Director: David Fincher

Cast: Brad Pitt

Based on an F. Scott Fitzgerald book of the same name, this satire about ageing is witty and carried well by the likes of Pitt, as Benjamin Button grows from old man to a newborn.



THE BUZZ

What's really going on behind-the-scenes

Smallville creators, Alfred Gough and Miles Millar, have been roped into a movie adaptation of *Robotech*.

This live-action version of a Japanese classic will involve Tobey Maguire in a

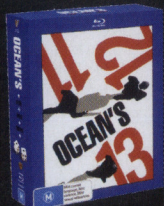
producing role, but will Spider-Man also help battle extraterrestrial forces onscreen as one of the young fighter pilots? We're yet to hear clarification.

Robotech was originally three different

anime television series' combined into 85 episodes for a Western audience. It revolves around the story of mankind being forced to use new technology to fend off an alien invasion. Radular!

BLU-RAY | **DIRECTOR:** STEVEN SODERBERGH | **CAST:** GEORGE CLOONEY, BRAD PITT, MATT DAMON, ANDY GARCIA

OCEAN'S BOXSET (M)



From a brilliant plan thick with scheming, cunning and disguises, through to bringing down a hotel in order to exact revenge, the

Ocean's crew have provided three of the cheekiest movies to come out of Las Vegas. Director Soderbergh has successfully created a new Rat pPck with the *Ocean's* trilogy – the clan honestly seem like they're rocking up more for the script than the money.

The series kicks off with an outstanding cast – the witty lines roll off their tongues thanks to a well-executed script full of great banter. Then, of course, there's the backdrop, 'cos this is Vegas, baby!

Then comes *12*, three years after *11* Danny Ocean is gathering up the gang again in New York ready to jet off to Amsterdam, Rome and Paris to pull off three heists. It isn't quite the same – especially with a rival called the Dinner Jacket. COME ON!

Finally, rounding off the three films is a good old fashioned revenge story. Like all good gangs, you cross one you cross them all. Though not as successful as the first, the cast make it worth a bet!

EXTRAS: 8

VERDICT:

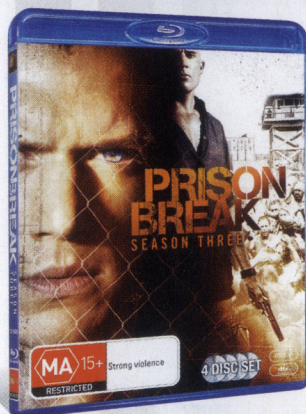
Roll the dice on this one! You're in for a ride, which you'll most likely enjoy.

9



IF YOU LIKE THIS TRY...
The Godfather Part II

The best Vegas film ever.



PRISON BREAK SEASON 3 (MA15+)

Creator: Paul Scheuring

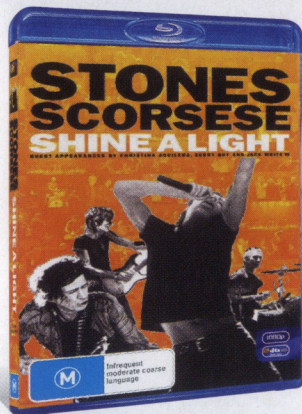
Cast: Wentworth Miller, Dominic Purcell and Amaury Nolasco

Due to a strike, this season got cut from 22 to 13 episodes and it shows. Based around yet another prison break, the original premise, this time the stories and circumstances are implausible and sometimes laughable.

EXTRAS: 6

VERDICT:
Let's cross our fingers for season four!

6



SHINE A LIGHT (M)

Director: Martin Scorsese

Cast: Mick Jagger, Keith Richards and Charlie Watts

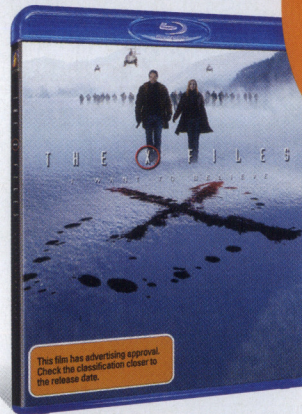
Take one legendary band, *The Rolling Stone*, and one renowned director, Martin Scorsese, over a two-day period in New York City and watch the energy explode.

With great guest appearances, this is all about the atmosphere of being with a band, having fun at what they do.

EXTRAS: N/A

VERDICT:
A must for music and doco fans.

9



THE X-FILES: I WANT TO BELIEVE (M)

Director: Chris Carter

Cast: David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson

TV shows don't automatically make good movies, and while shows like the *X-Files* had their time, it has definitely passed. While some may have been excited about the release, many will be disappointed with the movie itself.

EXTRAS: 7

VERDICT:
We still want to believe, but have been let down!

6



STEEL MIGNOLAS

We spoke to the man behind the big red chunk of demon, writer and artist Mike Mignola

OPS: Was Hellboy originally designed as a demon for the US government?

MIKE MIGNOLA: I didn't draw him with anything in mind. In 1991, he was just a big, lunky monster. I thought it was funny, but I kept going back to him every couple of years. I wanted something with humour, that was all.

OPS: Where do the Nazi and folklore themes feed in from?

MIGNOLA: I often get asked "how much research do you do?" and the answer is not much. Everything feeds from my interest in folklore and mythology. It's not like I spend my time making my way through old museums reading my way with candlelight. I've been collecting books like this since I can remember.

OPS: How difficult was it to pick a director for the *Hellboy* films?

MIGNOLA: The trick is to find someone that isn't faithful but knows the subject matter, Guillermo del Toro gets it right because he presents the spirit of *Hellboy*. As with the *Iron Man* film, it's all about the subtleties. There's a lot that has to be hammered down, a lot is lost or cut because it has to play well to a wider audience. Listening to Guillermo del Toro talk about *Hellboy* it was very clear that he knew what to do. We spoke the same language.

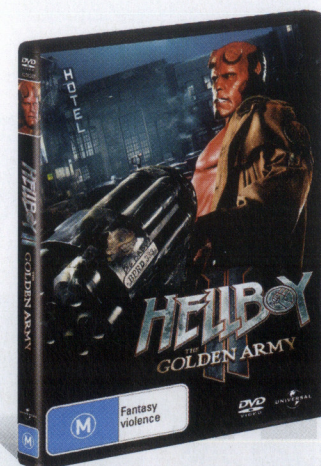
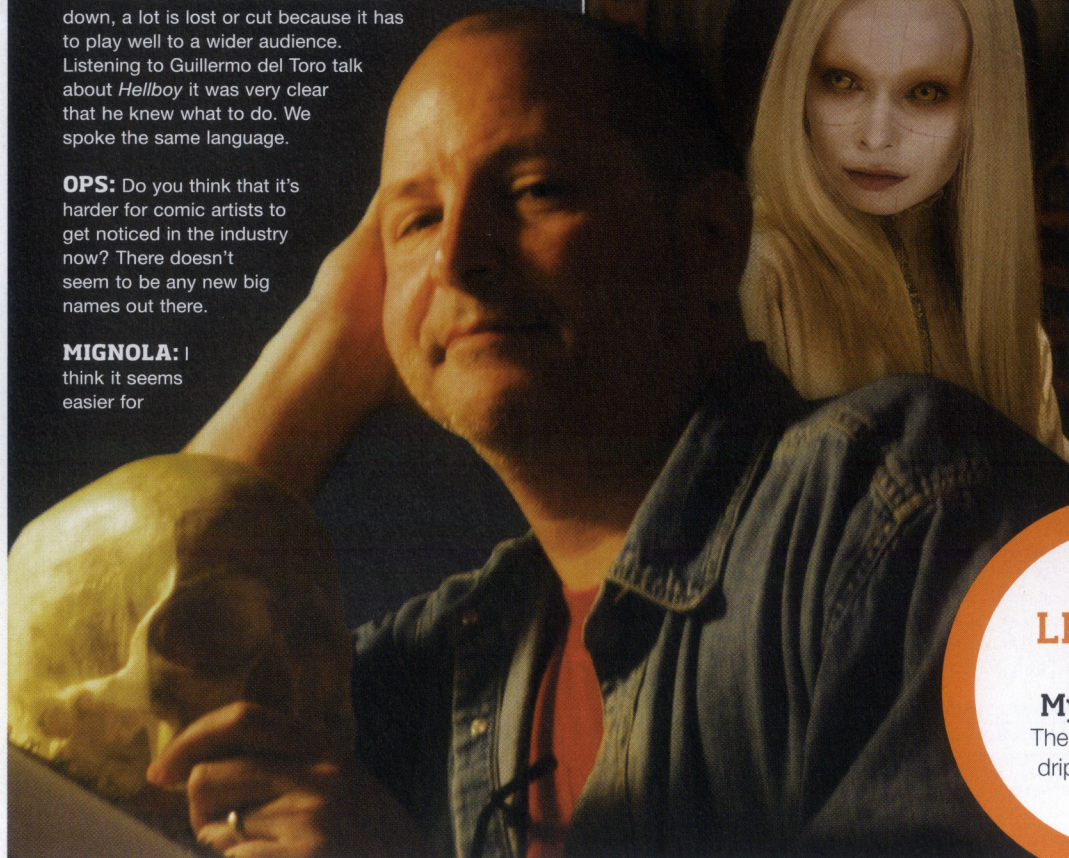
OPS: Do you think that it's harder for comic artists to get noticed in the industry now? There doesn't seem to be any new big names out there.

MIGNOLA: I think it seems easier for

people to get stuff out there. There are so many ways to approach it and pull off self-publication, but yes, it makes it harder to be seen. Independent publishers are pushing things forward. This also produces a broader range of stuff. Previously, there was a very minute focus on superheroes, but that has been expanded so much. It's exciting to see people enter the industry who aren't ever thinking about mainstream acceptance.



➔ You go straight to hell, boy!



HELLBOY II: THE GOLDEN ARMY (M)

Director: Guillermo del Toro

Cast: Ron Perlman, Selma Blair and Doug Jones

Unstoppable armies are not something that you want to cross, but at least there always seems to be someone around to... well, stop them. Luckily, when humankind comes face-to-face with a ruthless leader, oddly played by Luke Goss of boy band *Bros*, fame, the biggest, baddest, reddest superhero is ready to put his fist through things in order to stop them dead in their tracks.

Mexican director Guillermo del Toro knows his subject matter and *Hellboy* is a sure sign of his nerdiness. In an action film such as this, it's nice to see that everything isn't reliant on high tech gadgets, cars and weapons to push the story. Instead you have the brute force of 'Red', water-dwelling fishman like Abe Sapien and a pyrokinetic girlfriend Liz Sherman.

A great mix of love, fantasy and action with great one liners thrown in for a little bit of punch. Line up to get your hands on the right hand of dooooo!

EXTRAS: 7

VERDICT:
One of the best comic book
to movie adaptations!

8

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DOCTOR WHO: SERIES 4 // LOST BOYS 2 //
EUREKA: SEASON 2 // KYLEXY // THEY LIVE
// STARSHIP TROOPERS 3 // DARK CITY

INTERVIEW

**Supernatural
stars speak!**

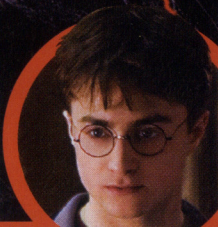
Exclusive interview with
Jared and Jensen

SciFiNow
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Season
Preview**

HEROES 3

**HARRY
POTTER**

AND THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE
Sequel secrets revealed!



**Nightmare
On Elm Street**

Wes Craven looks back at
the adventures of one of
Eighties horror's true icons



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INTERNET

Gaming, trailers, downloads, friends

LATEST

Download this...

Iron Man



The game was truly a suckfest, but the movie was mightily impressive, download the Blu-ray trailer and bear witness.

Metal Gear Solid 4



It has a bloody demo now! Better late than never we guess, this demo features a section from act one's Middle Eastern stage.

Mirror's Edge



This title's almost as divisive as *Assassin's Creed* – you'll either love it or hate it. Check this demo and decide for yourself...

LittleBigPlanet



DLC is flying in thick and fast – including some free outfits (and one hideously overpriced Sackboy t-shirt). We want more!

Quest for Booty



It's a bit overpriced, but it's still probably the best game on the PSN in terms of high production values. Check it out now.

NEWS

DLC BLOWOUT

Mirror's Edge promises new content

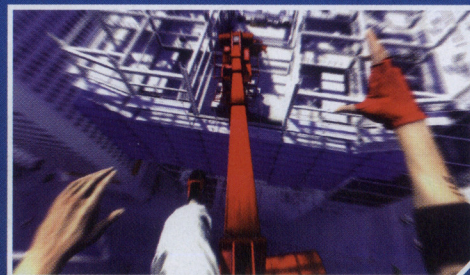
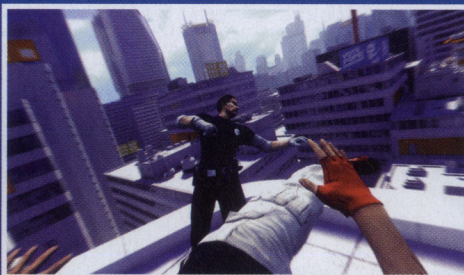
While the 360 exclusive downloadable content for *GTA IV* was a bit of a blow to loyal PS3 owners, it seems that Sony is starting to get some jabs back at Microsoft on the DLC front.

First out of the blocks is *Mirror's Edge*, the game that represents EA's move towards using the PS3 as their lead platform. Apparently a Sony rep has let slip that EA's impressive new first person title will receive some exclusive downloadable content early in 2009.

We have little idea what that content is, but we're hoping it's a new level of some kind, rather than some sort of addition to the time trial aspect of the game. That would undoubtedly rule.

And speaking of DLC, the word on the street (there isn't actually a street, we've just always wanted to say that) is that *PoP* will also feature some downloadable content. At this stage we're pretty sure it will be cross platform, but we're not 100% sure.

We'll be in touch.



NEWS

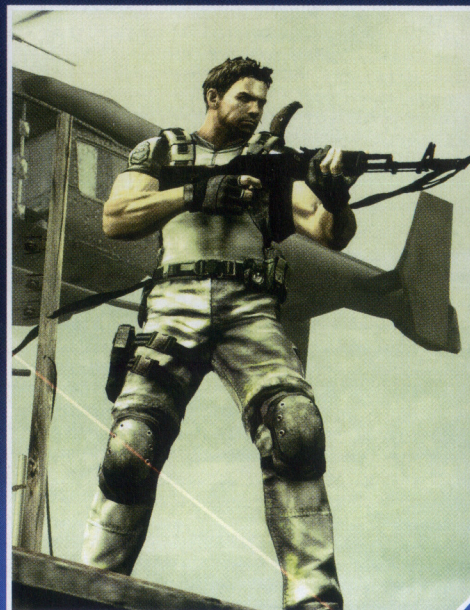
RESIDENT EVIL 5 DEMO!

PSN demo confirmed!

As if we weren't already completely sold on the idea of dropping \$100+ on *Resident Evil 5*, the latest rumours coming out of Capcom state that a demo for the game is currently in the works.

In addition, when producer Jun Takeuchi was asked whether or not the team was planning any kind of DLC for *Resident Evil 5* they neither confirmed or denied it, but stated that it was possible. Hmm... interesting.

At this stage we just want the bloody game!!!





ONLINE REVIEWS



CRASH COMMANDO

Crash and burn

Crash Commando is a bizarre paradox. It's the direct antithesis of modern gaming – it's 2D and features a uniquely 16-bit style art design that seemingly targets bearded, retro-gaming nostalgia fiends – but in many ways it is a very modern experience that combines the frantic multiplayer chaos of *Super Smash Brothers* with a brilliantly varied weapon set.

Strangely enough *Crash Commando* is like a pure shooter, ala *Halo*, shrunk down to miniature size and made tangible and accessible. It's *Worms* with guns, and a tight set of gameplay mechanics that never stop being fun, not even for a second.

It controls as such: the left analogue stick moves your 'Commando' around the map, the right analogue stick controls your aiming. Pushing **□** enables you to jet around the levels for a limited time, and **△** is for shooting the holy living hell out of anything in your immediate radius (not including your teammates, of course).

The weapons, for the most part, are well balanced, with the grenade launcher perhaps being a bit too powerful. The machine gun is pay and spray, the sniper requires aiming skill, the rocket requires timing, etc. All the fundamental balancing we've seen in every shooter in the last five years is present and correct.

Vehicles work how vehicles are supposed to – as a fun diversion from the core mechanics, yet not so overpowering as to break the game itself – and the

controls, while initially bemusing, are as robust and rewarding as they come.

It all comes together brilliantly. The aiming is just difficult enough to require skill, and instantly intuitive enough not to intimidate new players – the cool jet pack/jump dynamic gives players multiple options for last minute evasions, adding a real layer of depth to the proceedings.

But here's our major issue – no splitscreen, no offline multiplayer. Truly unforgivable. For a game with the potential to have as much of a feverish cult following as *Smash Bros* and *Worms*, *Crash Commando* needed to have some sort of multiplayer that could be played with four friends huddled round a single TV. Online is fine, but for a quirky multiplayer focused title such as this, the lack of splitscreen is a true aberration.

But, aside from that one (major) faux pax, *Crash Commando* is almost impossible to dislike. The weapons are balanced, the mechanics are playful and rewarding, but most importantly it's a great concept brilliantly executed. We have no hesitations in recommending this little gem.



VERDICT:

Lack of splitscreen stings, but *Crash Commando* is a well executed PSN title.

8



CHARACTER ASSASSINATIONS

If anyone ever doubted the links that exist between Ubisoft's lynchpin franchises, *Assassin's Creed* and *Prince of Persia*, then that time for doubt is over. Ubisoft has recently announced that fans, after linking their Ubisoft account with their PSN tag, can actually download a playable, cel-shaded, Altair for *Prince of Persia*. This essentially means that it's possible to play through the entirety of the game as Altair. We want another – and after Konami so graciously allowed Snake to dress up as Altair in *MGS4* we're hoping for the ability to play through *PoP* as a cel-shaded Solid Snake!



LOLGASM

Doing it for the lulz...



JOHN WILLIAMS TRIBUTE

GOOGLE: John Williams tribute



RESIDENT EVIL 4 SPOOF

GOOGLE: Resident Evil 4 spoof Krauser



BIOSHOCKING

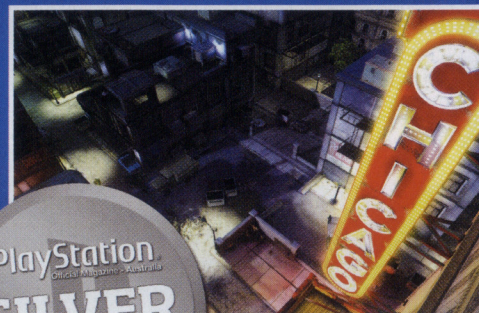
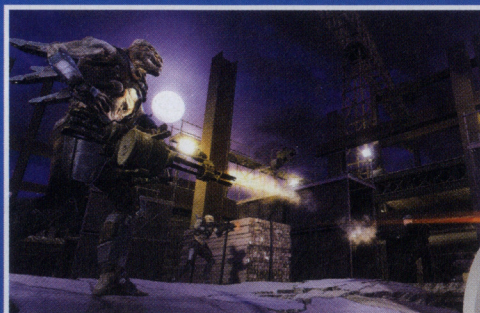
GOOGLE: BioShock Big Daddy Halloween Costume

REVIEW



INFO

GENRE: SHOOTER
RELEASE: NOW
DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
DEVELOPER: INSOMNIAC
PLAYERS: 1-60
PRICE: \$109.95



PlayStation
**SILVER
 AWARD**

RESISTANCE 2 ONLINE REVIEW

"Okay men, if it has more eyes than fingers - shoot it!"

Last issue we showed you the awe and majesty of *Resistance 2*. Oh, okay - it's not quite the cinematic, gut punch of *Call of Duty: World at War* (best shooter of the year? Quite possibly) but readers, seriously: big, huge, monsters, alternate history storyline, actual answers to the questions the first game asked and just a general sense of everything, every little aspect, being improved and honed. Seriously, what's not to like?

Okay graphically there are a few dull textures - and the game lacks that fine touch found in the likes of *COD*, but all that's kind of forgotten when you see the huge Leviathan in the Chicago level punching the crap out of a tall building like a high definition *Rampage*.

Good times, good times.

REMINDER NOTICE

So, just to recap - the single player campaign is brilliant, albeit a tad short,

and the eight-player campaign is a stroke of genius. But after all that, there's the multiplayer.

You get into multiplayer by choosing competitive mode. We rattled on enough about the co-op last ish so let's take a gander at the other one.

One brilliant aspect of *Resistance 2* is that finally, in a multiplayer game, you don't have to worry about shooting one of your own men because the enemy looks so similar to you. Like the first game the competitive element has pitiful HU-MANS facing off against the mighty Chimera hordes.

But this time there's a difference.

See, if memory serves *Resistance: Fall of Man* multiplayer was pretty much a run and gun affair. You'd pick up weapons, you'd lose them and so on and so forth.

This time you have a few neat tricks that keep things interesting. When you get into the game's lobby check out your character: be he human or

Chimeran there are options aplenty. You can start with any of the many weapons - grenade launchers, sniper rifles, that weird marksman gun - the whole box and dice. Plus when you get killed you can choose a different weapon to come back with.

"MY LOVE FOR YOU IS A TICKING CLOCK - BERSERKER!"

As if that's not cool enough, you also have a berserker load out. See, both humans and the Chimera have berserker powers in this game. And you can choose which one you want.

There's one that makes you a lot stronger and able to take more hits, there's one where - if you're Chimera - the special will let your team see the human's bright green outlines. Perfect for an auger heavy team of Chimbos.

The humans aren't left hanging either. You can choose experimental bullets that tend to rend the Chimera

with extreme prejudice.

Oh yeah, there was one other thing that people seemed excited about... what was that, again?

SIXTY PLAYER MULTIPLAYER?!

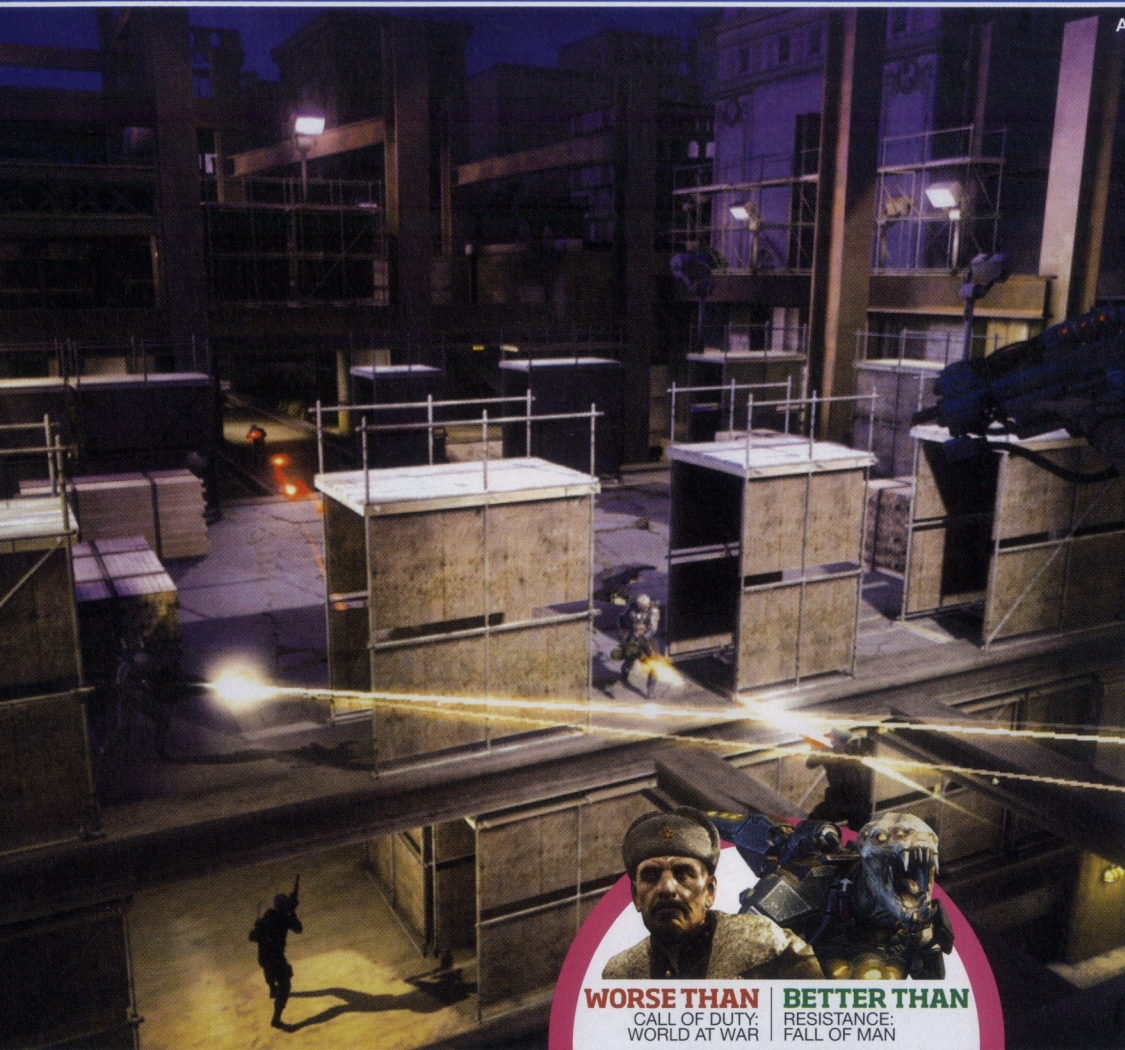
Sixty Player Multiplayer, that's the one! Hell, up until now 30, even 16-player multi was impressive. This time they've gone and let it off the chain. Strangely, however, the modes of combat are... well, quite generic.


Four modes: Deathmatch (chaos), Team Deathmatch (organised chaos), Skirmish (objective based battles, a personal favourite) and Core Control (capture the flag). Perhaps after creating servers that host 60-player matches they were too tired to add games where a player controls a big monster and everyone else tries to kill you? That would rule.

And it's not out of the question. We suspect *Res 2* will be well served for

PSP CONNECTIVITY?

If you tinker around with the options you'll find a bit where you plug your PSP in and swap around some weapons. This will effect the multiplayer too, no doubt, giving you yet another weapon for your impressive arsenal.



Aliens – why can't we just be friends, eh? 

WORSE THAN
CALL OF DUTY:
WORLD AT WAR

BETTER THAN
RESISTANCE:
FALL OF MAN

downloadable content and extra levels, guns and all that good stuff.

HOW ARE THE MAPS?

Ahhh yes, the maps. They're excellent. Not all of them will host 60 players but a good portion do – and the smaller maps tend to be more intense anyway. Maps include Iceland, San Francisco, Orick (that's a great one for Core Control or Skirmish), Redwoods, Bryce Canyon, Chicago, Louisiana and the Chicxulub Crater in Mexico. The more you play the more you upgrade – unlocking extra armour and tech. Look, they've not plucked this idea from the ether, it was only a matter of time before someone made a multiplayer component this large – but it's so great that it's *Resistance 2* doing it.

Playing Skirmish with 59 other people is a pure delight. Plus the gore has been amped up as in the main game. Expect to see heads blown off or enemies explode into little pieces.

FINAL THOUGHTS

It breaks down like this. If *Resistance 2* was just the single-player campaign, or just the eight-player campaign or just the massive 60-player multi – we'd probably call it a good start.

But it's all three of these amazing parts that make the whole. *Resistance 2* is for fans of the run and gun genre. You'll use sniper rifles but not a lot. No, *Res 2* is action all the way. Snarling aliens being torn apart by berserk-pimped ordinance or filthy humans copping a hedgehog grenade, spearing them all with deadly tines.

With all the elements combined this is a hard game to beat and a worthy second chapter in the *Resistance* universe. Insomniac has done it again. Makes you wonder what they'll pull out in the inevitable third game. A 60-player campaign? Who knows – but in the meantime get into *Resistance 2* and have explosive, gory fun. Go on, off you pop. **Anthony O'Connor**

FINAL SAY:



- Frantic, explosive action
- 60 people online with no slow down



- Unimaginative game modes
- You're not online

VERDICT:

Resistance 2 - the main game - got a 9. The multiplayer gets one too. The way they expand the play area is fantastic. Online fans - get ready for the next level.

9



GOING ABSOLUTELY BERKO

Have a play around with the berserk modes. The one that shields you from gunfire really isn't that great, whereas the one that makes you shoot jagged electrical sparks is 11 shades of groovy. Just wait until the bar fills up and pull down on the D-pad. A very nice touch.



Gadgets to support your gaming life

SONY BRAVIA KDL70X3500

\$69,999



THE DREAM SETUP

Money can't buy happiness, but it can buy this...

Who says money can't buy happiness? Well, journalists will probably never know - because the majority of us will never have enough of it to find out. But if you do have a bit of cash seeping out of your pockets, try investing in something like this and see how happy you become. Yes, that price is right! The Sony Bravia 70 inch LCD will set you back \$69,999. WOW! We want.

SONY MDRSA3000

\$799.95

LOGITECH HARMONY 1000i UNIVERSAL REMOTE CONTROL

\$799.95



PLAYSTATION 3

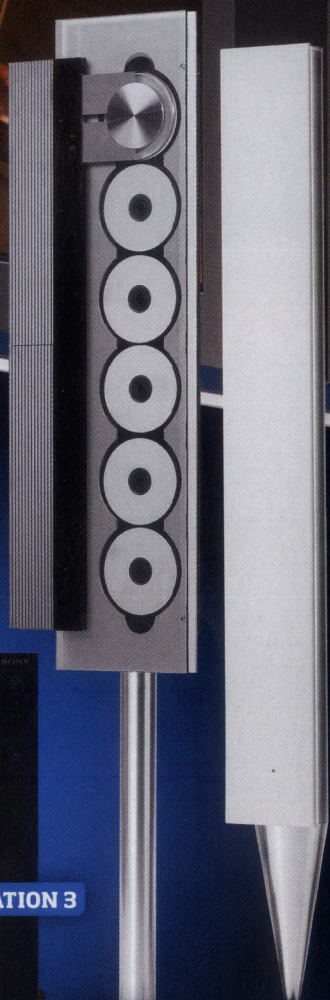
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THE BASIC SETUP

For those of you trying to beat the dastardly credit crunch

You still need money to buy this happiness, but it's significantly less than the brain-shattering price of the ultimate setup over the page there. A few good shifts down at your local supermarket will see this setup transport from the showroom to your lounge room in no time at all. The simplest things are the sweetest right? Well, not exactly, but it'll do until you win the lottery...

INSIGHT

Tips and cheats



FALLOUT 3

Time to take a fall...

Welcome, brave adventurer. Sick of being mauled by molerats? Getting fed up with those damn fireants burning a hole in your pants? Well, it's a good thing you have us to help you out. Of course, holding your hand through a game as massive as *Fallout 3* just isn't going to happen in just one issue of the this magazine. Instead, what we offer you is some handy tips and tricks to make that search for your old man (in the game's main quest) a little bit easier. We've travelled deep into the Wasteland for these, and only just managed to fight our way back to Vault 101 (don't even ask about the radscorpion problem in the basement), so you may as well make use of our hard-fought labour.

HERE BOY!

In order to find Dogmeat, you need to find a place called Scrapyard. If you discover a town called Minefield, simply head south-east to find Scrapyard. Once you have Dogmeat as a companion, he'll follow you around, search out ammo, attack enemies and other cool stuff. Just be careful to heal him as he can (and will) die, which can be a real bummer.

V.A.T.S. AMAZING

If you find that you're constantly getting attacked without warning, make sure to hit the V.A.T.S. button to scout out each new area. It will often zoom in on enemies that have not appeared on your radar. Really

handy for avoiding ambushes or, alternatively, running into battle like a suicidal maniac.

BUTTER FINGERS

There are a couple of handy uses for grabbing and holding objects in the game (as opposed to putting them in your inventory). The first is somewhat nefarious – you can actually grab hold of items that you want to steal and then take them to a private area in order to not get spotted doing so. Another cool tip is to grab hold of very heavy objects (such as power armour) that would normally cause you to be encumbered, and carry them back to a safe storage place. Perfect for those times when you just can't bear to part with some cool loot.

TRY AGAIN

Just in case you aren't aware, lockpicking bobby pins tend to break the third time you try to force a lock. So, why not simply try it twice, then sneakily quit out of the attempt and start over again? It works, and best of all you'll never break a bobby pin again.

A similar approach can be used when hacking terminals. You get four attempts to hack a console before it is disabled permanently. Simply try to hack each terminal three times, then quit out and restart the process. While you'll get a different set of words each time, at least this way you're sure to succeed... eventually.



SUPER DUPER MUTANTS

There are five of those massive super mutant behemoths in the game. Here are their locations, so you can get some awesome XP points taking them down: Evergreen Mills, Galaxy News Radio, Jury Station, Takoma Industrial and The Capitol Building.

BOBBLEHEAD LOCATIONS

Scattered throughout the map are 20 special Bobblehead figurines, each of which give you an immediate stat increase (+1) or skill boost (+10). Their locations are: **Megaton:** Sheriff Lucas Simm's house (Strength), **Republic of Dave:** on

a bookshelf in the Museum of Dave (Perception), **Deathclaw Sanctuary:** on a table next to a brahmin corpse (Endurance), **Vault 108:** in the cloning lab (Charisma), **Rivet City:** on a table in the science lab (Intelligence), **Greener Pastures Disposal:** in the small office with radiation (Agility), **Arlington Cemetery:** on the shelf in the basement of a house near the cemetery (Luck), **Evergreen Mills:** on a shelf at the back of the Market Bazaar (Barter), **Fort Constantine:** inside a safe in the basement of the CO quarters (Big Guns), **Raven Rock:** inside the force field room on level two (Energy Weapons), **WKML Broadcast Station:** through a doorway to the sealed cistern (Explosives),

Bethesda Ruins: to the east on the top floor near the door to the bridge (Lockpick), **Vault 101:** on your father's desk (Medicine), **Dunwich Building Virulent Underchambers:** on the floor next to a door (Melee Weapons), **Aerefu:** in Evan King's house (Repair), **Vault 106:** on a table in the living quarters on the second floor (Science), **National Guard Depot:** on a shelf in the armoury (Small Guns), **Yao Guai Tunnels:** atop a metal box in the den (Sneak), **Paradise Falls:** on a table inside Eulogy's house (Speech), **Rockopolis:** west from Casey Smith's garage and near some tattered banners (Unarmed). ♫

INDEX

All the games that matter on PS3!

WANTED

My precious...



AFRO SAMURAI

With all the fuss over *SFIV*, this beat 'em up has fallen through the cracks a tad. Promising strategic hacking and slashing, this spin-off from the anime series of the same name features Samuel L. Jackson voicing the eponymous character. We happy? Yes, we are.



ALIENS: COLONIAL MARINES

Yeah, the bitch is back! Set after the events of *Alien 3*, *Colonial Marines* is in tactical shooter territory, as you control a team of four colonial marines in search of Ripley, Hicks and the rest of the Sulaco crew. Promises painstaking attention to detail – here kitty, kitty, kitty!



F.E.A.R. 2: PROJECT ORIGIN

Rage-inflamed Alma, she who blows away the phrase "build a bridge", returns to unleash more psychological horror shenanigans. Taking up where the first left off, but with a different protagonist, the graphics have been improved – a lot.



HYDROPHOBIA

The Titanic goes 21st century, as a city-sized cruise ship christened the 'Queen of the World', haven of the posh escaping the ravages of rising sea levels, is bombed and starts sinking. If the water FX are as drool-worthy as promised then we say "yay!"



QUANTUM THEORY

From what we've seen, this third-person shooter from Tecmo is looking pretty slick (and lots like *Gears of War* – shh!). With more firepower than the southern states of the US and the hook of a 'living tower' – cover can just grow or disappear – we're primed.



SONIC'S ULTIMATE MEGADRIVE COLLECTION

We respect history, and the promise of 40 classics from SEGA's golden age has us bowing, curtsying and otherwise dishing out the reverence.

SIMPLY THE BEST...

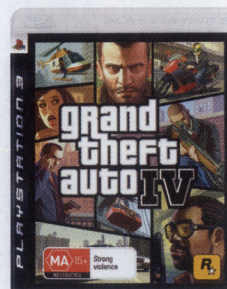
All of our top rated games so far...



MGS4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

Arguably the best PS3 game to date – an endlessly replayable masterpiece.

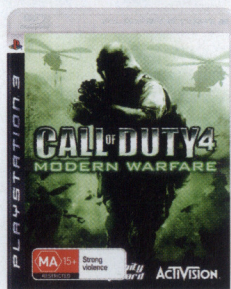
10



GRAND THEFT AUTO IV

A technical beast, featuring the most intricate, well designed city environments ever.

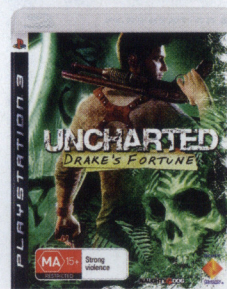
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CALL OF DUTY 4

Blasts past at a blistering 60 frames per second, with the best set pieces ever.

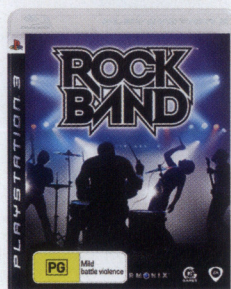
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UNCHARTED: DRAKE'S FORTUNE

Visually, the best game on the market, with perfectly balanced gameplay.

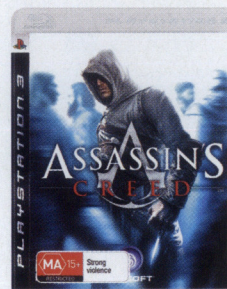
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ROCK BAND

The best party game ever conceived, with an incredible setlist that continues to expand.

10



ASSASSIN'S CREED

One of the few next-gen games that truly plays like a next-gen game – incredible vision.

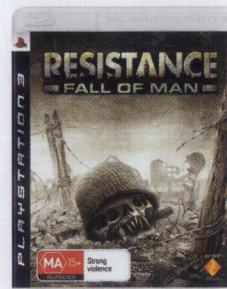
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MOTORSTORM

A mind-blowing racing experience, and our personal favourite launch title.

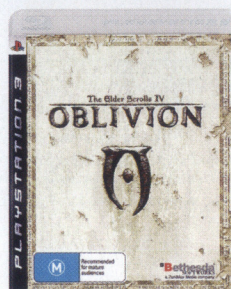
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RESISTANCE: FALL OF MAN

A solid single player campaign, and an absolutely stellar multiplayer mode.

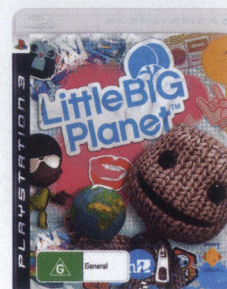
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THE ELDER SCROLLS IV: OBLIVION

Few games can match *Oblivion* in terms of sheer scope. The best RPG on the PS3.

10



LITTLEBIG PLANET

Videogaming will never be the same again – endlessly rewarding and replayable.

10

TOP 5 WEIRD WEAPONS

CANIS CANEM EDIT (PS2) - SUPER SWEET BALLS

Lucky bands weren't the most thrilling collectibles, until finding all 75 yielded the super ball.



DESTROY ALL HUMANS (PS2) - ANAL PROBE GUN

The weapon that let you go all zappy on peoples' arses, making the victims' head explode. Ouch!



POP: WARRIOR WITHIN (PS2) - TEDDY BEAR

Swordplay and cuddliness – an unbeatable combo! This stuffed mammal restored your life. Aww!



PROJECT ZERO/FATAL FRAME (PS2) - CAMERA

More than just a creator of shakeable Polaroid pictures, it trapped ghouls on film...



RATCHET & CLANK: TOOLS OF DESTRUCTION (PS3) - GROOVITRON

This whacked-out disco ball caused all enemies within its radius to get on down and boogie.



TOP 5 ATMOSPHERES

BIOSHOCK

The dystopian, underwater alterna-'60s world of Rapture is deep – figuratively and literally. Tugs upon your sense of morality just add to the vibe.



THE DARKNESS

From the subways to the streets of modern day New York, with the Aussie dollar down the dunny this is the affordable way to visit NYC!



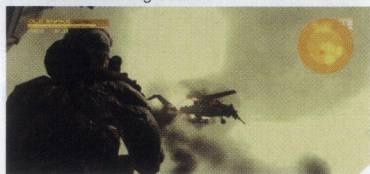
DEAD SPACE

Stuck in a busted spaceship, battling Corruption has never been so bloody creepy! If there was ever a game to scare the eeps out of you, this is it.



METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

Talk about grey power, Snake retired 20 years ago and he's still kicking butt!



PORTAL (THE ORANGE BOX)

So it's atmosphere is old school, yet something about the echoey clunks and clanks – and GLaDOS – keeps sucking us into this like a Dyson. Plus – we love cake!



UNDER THE RADAR



GITAROO MAN

When it comes to odd, completely "WTF?" games for the PS2... erm, actually *Katamari Damacy* and *We Love Katamari* share the gold medal. But clutching onto the silver proudly is *Gitaroo-Man*, a weird but infinitely wonderful rhythm game from the days before multiple plastic axes became standard games room kit.

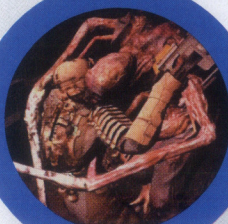
A relentless assault on the senses, *Gitaroo-Man* is bright, manic, brash and bordering on epileptic. Filled with all manner of J-pop, J-rock, J-funk and J-(insert musical style here) played by your backing band of deadpan animal-suited folk, a crazed tale of bullied boy U-1 – who is actually the latest descendant in a long line of heroes from the planet Gitaroo – unfolds, courtesy of a peculiar talking dog that bears a striking resemblance to a blushing jellybean. He's in charge of helping you master the great gitaroo art – which is either stabbing at each of the four controller buttons rhythmically as circles hurtle toward a wee blue dot mid-screen, or laying down combos of analogue stick movements and button presses as you follow squiggly lines representing notes about the screen to bring down enemies ranging from keyboard-bedecked spaceships to funky soul brother bees.

Sound easy? BWAHAHA! Foolish earthling! The difficulty level is insane on the most basic setting. Anybody expecting to ace it in a couple of tries is fooling themselves – or, quite possibly, another being from planet Gitaroo...

Proving you don't need a plastic geetaw to have a rockin' good rhythmic time, this criminally under-loved gem is a must-own for any PlayStation music nut. Come on! Let's go! Give it a shot!



READER REVIEWS DEAD SPACE



I don't often get to buy new games - because let's face it they are just so expensive - but the more I heard about *Dead Space* I just had to have it!!! I'm a long time fan of games like *Resident Evil* and even games like *Alone in the Dark* and *Silent Hill*. So, I was

pleased that there was a new type of horror game, which was guaranteed to make me squeal with delight. It didn't even bother me that I woke up my parents in the middle of the night with my screaming. Sure, I might have nightmares for the next year, I may have even been worried about wetting the bed, but as soon as Isaac gets

attacked by one of those big dudes and you're trying to hack off legs. Well, I just knew it was money well spent. Everyone should check out this game! I can't remember the last time I had so much fun! And dude's the comic is also so rad! Thanks.

— Dale Jameson

INFAMOUS

What the hell is going on here...



"Did I remember to record 'Packed to the Rafters' last night? Oh, the wife is going to have my guts for garters..."



PSYCHONAUTS

"Whoa! I think that stuff just kicked in, wheee!"

Calling *Psychonauts* a trippy game is like saying there's a "bit of a scuffle" in Iraq. In fact, the genius behind this game – Tim Schafer – based it on a peyote-related experience.

Now, settle down! We don't mean Tim necked a handful of 'the goof balls' and ran around naked, underpants on his head, pulling invisible rats off his body. Rather there was an abandoned peyote 'tripping sequence' in the game *Full Throttle* that the developers "couldn't make work."

Schafer not only made it work, but he developed it into an entire game.

Set in Whispering Rock Psychic Summer Camp, this is sort of a subversive mix of *X-Men* and *Harry Potter*. You've got a bunch of kids who can perform all manner of mental magic, you've got a protagonist Raz – who has escaped from the circus and stumbles across this school and learns how to unleash his own powers. Cute, right?

Well yes and no. Soon it becomes clear that all is not well in Whispering Rock and Raz has to learn some psychic powers, upgrade them, and defeat the

super evil secret baddie!

The great thing about this game is that you can, quite literally, go into the mind of your foe or friend.

In there you will find their deepest secrets (usually personified as something horrible and nasty), repressed memories and emotional baggage. Which is actually baggage that is emotional: a crying handbag, a weeping suitcase and so on. Visual puns. We like 'em.

As your powers grow so do the foes. But that's okay, you level up, become powerful and save people from themselves. It's all a bit 'psychiatrist's couchy' when you think about it.

The whole game is a seamless mix of platforming, action and crazy. Oh there's a lot of crazy. But it's the good kind – the compelling, just one more game kind.

The whole caper has a really nice stylised look that is sort of Tim Burton by way of the great *Invader Zim*.

Even the voice of Zim himself – Steven Horvitz – is the voice of Raz. Tim Schafer brought us the crazy *Grim Fandango* and *Maniac Mansion: Day of the Tentacle* but

surpassed himself with *Psychonauts*.

It reviewed through the roof but people weren't hooked in. It looks like a kid's game. Even a weird kid's game. But seriously readers, check bargain bins for this PS2 game – it's an absolute cracker and an unsung hero. Wonderful stuff.

— Anthony O'Connor



WHERE'S OUR BRUTAL LEGEND?



Fans of Schafer's kooky – but utterly addictive – style have been waiting for his next effort, *Brutal Legend*. A Jack Black-voiced third person adventure game with co-op?! Where you kill monsters with electric guitar feedback? We want it and we want it now! Apparently it's still coming. And we're still waiting [sigh].

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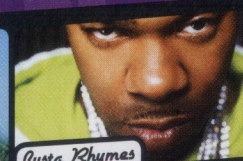
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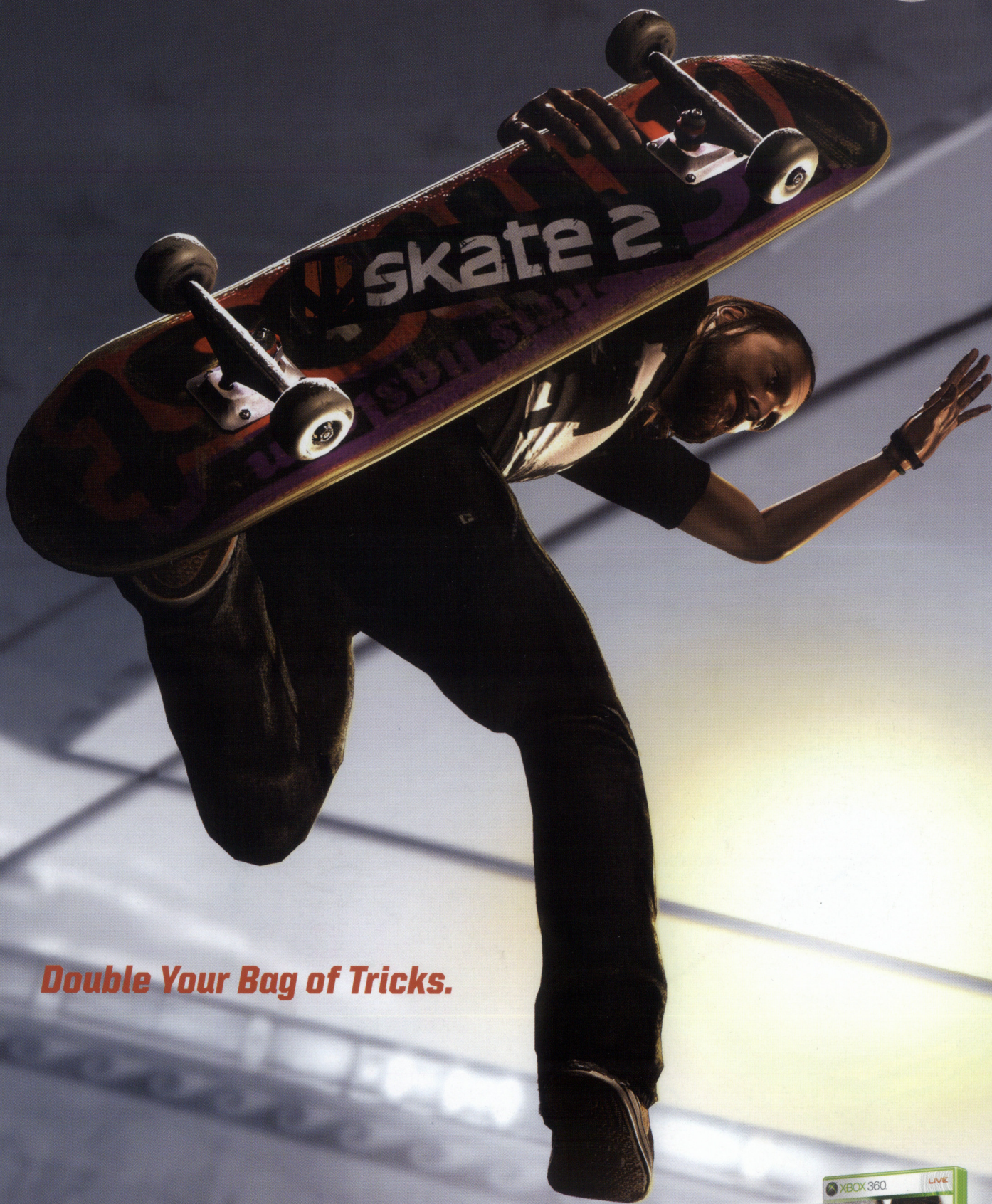
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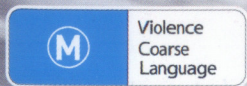
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